

Lady Marion's Answer





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LADY MARIGN'S HOME.

Lady Marion's Answer.

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KENNEDY'S NEW HOME," ETC.



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LADY MARION'S ANSWER.

CHAPTER I.

SIR WILLIAM'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

CRAGSBY CASTLE was situated on the bank of the river Tay, not far from the Grampian Hills. It derived its name from its close proximity to a high, craggy mountain. When the building was first contemplated several sites were proposed, but the site by the crags was chosen. After a while the name The Castle by the Crags became contracted into Cragby Castle.

In this castle dwelt Marion Campbell. She lived in the distant past, but that matters not to us; for the joys and sorrows of the human family are ever repeated. "The thing that hath been is that which shall be." When we read the history of those whose lives belonged to another age we feel that we are acting over again the parts of others; that human nature is the same under various manifestations as generation succeeds

generation. So, though Lady Marion has long since slept the dull sleep of death, the story of her life may wake an echo in many a heart. Her story opens at the time when life has most of interest, in the flush of early womanhood.

Many a fair lady had graced with her presence these ancestral halls, and many a Marion too; for the name had been handed down in the Campbell family time out of mind. Sir William Campbell, the present occupant of the castle, thought that the name had never been worn by any one so beautiful as his own daughter. Although he had no son to bear his name, and although the fortunes of the family were sadly changed, he had high hopes for Marion. In her charms he saw great possibilities. He thought that an ancient name united with so much beauty and grace would more than compensate for the emptiness of her father's coffers. To this end he made it his business to entertain many sons of fortune. And this was no difficult thing to do. Cragsby Castle was the only considerable castle within many miles, and it was a very attractive place, standing as it did in the midst of such beautiful and diversified scenery as can be presented by picturesque mountains and quiet, glassy lakes. The mountain-sides were dotted with clumps of alder and hazel, the summits were crowned with

ash and oak, while here and there a little stream flowed down, looking like a silver thread, winding serpent-like past the roots of trees, then passing hurriedly through the crevices of gray cleft rocks, and again lost in the tangled vines and coppice that skirted the lake. Here, then, under the shadow of the mountains, where nature had scattered her wealth in profusion, where a young life would naturally claim as much freedom as the air that sustained it, where in all the surrounding country each gray head was well stored with legendary lore, lived the maiden who was to wed him only whom her proud and calculating father should judge most suitable.

If this story were merely a love-story, or if it were written only to present life in its brightest and most pleasing aspect, we would linger around the rose-tinted morn of Marion's life; for that was sunny and joyous. But this part of her life, sweet as it was, was all too short, and sorrow and stern realities soon followed. The light and the brightness dropped suddenly out of her life and all at once it seemed as sombre and hard-featured as the old stone castle itself. The quiet little grotto no longer offered her the peace she was wont to find in them. The fields no longer smiled for her, and when her own calm lake mirrored her face she saw that it was wan and sad. What

had wrought the change? Something must have happened to give this leaden hue to existence.

Among her father's guests were two young men who often occupied her thoughts. One she regarded with as much affection as she dared; the other with an equal amount of aversion. As may be supposed, her own heart had singled out one as a kindred spirit; the other her father had chosen for her husband. In the eyes of Sir William Campbell the only requisite in a son-in-law was silver. His mind dwelt on this till all his finer conceptions were blunted; he even waived all ideas of right and wrong and justice. He thought of his daughter's marriage as a mere business transaction and therefore Roger Ainslie, the man whom Marion had chosen, was not to be compared to Malcolm Dalziel, who "handled mair siller in a year than Ainslie would in a lifetime."

Indeed, Ainslie was not invited to the castle in the way that Malcolm Dalziel was. He had accompanied Dalziel to the North on a hunting expedition, and Sir William, meeting them, extended an invitation to both because Roger was the friend of Dalziel.

Poverty as yet had not banished the good cheer from the castle, and the wine kept for sorest need sparkled on the board. But while Dalziel

drained his glass often, the other guest did not even sip the beverage. Sir William one day remarked, "You pay but an ill compliment to the wine I furnish, Ainslie."

Roger begged the pardon of his host and added, "I cannot forget the words o' the wise man, 'Wine is a mocker.'"

The answer displeased Sir William, and he said, "King David speaks o' it as 'wine that maketh glad the heart o' mon.'"

"There is no need of going back to King David," said Dalziel, lifting his glass; "here am I, a living witness to the happiness that flows from the social glass."

It had afforded Lady Marion no little satisfaction that approaching poverty prevented her father from replenishing the wine-cellar. She remembered her mother's sad face when her husband lingered too long over the cup, and on her death-bed she had begged him to banish it altogether.

Lady Marion had liked Ainslie from their first meeting, and the two young people soon grew very fond of each other. Roger often rode to the chase casting wistful glances behind, and Marion counted the hours before his return.

Dalziel also paid the young lady much attention, but it was not pleasing to her, and it soon

became evident that she avoided his society. Sir William supposed that a word from him would put a different face on affairs, and he lost no time in giving the advice he thought so necessary. But he had not counted on the strength of his daughter's will. The interview was a very unpleasant one. Words ran high, for Sir William was determined to carry his point, and Marion had much of the Campbell spirit that he had loved to see till it ran counter to his wishes. After quite a while, since Marion remained firm, her father said, "I wull give you twa days, my lass, to consider whether you wull be guided by your father's wishes or your ain notions. If your decision does not please me you may live to repent it."

The time given her for consideration was wholly unnecessary, for Marion knew that she could as well answer at once as two days later. However, she made no answer, but went to her room with a look of determination that spoke as plainly as words.

Marion's mother was dead and she sought no adviser. But her old nurse and warm friend, Elspeth Lundie, had overheard all that Sir William had said, and she was deeply interested. Lady Marion had never borne herself haughtily towards Elspeth, and the old servant was accustomed to speak freely about many things, though

her mistress reserved the right to make use of the advice or not as suited her. Upon this occasion Elspeth began, "Dear heart, but you are in a sair strait noo."

Marion looked up with surprise, and Elspeth continued, "Indeed, I hae heard ilka ward atween yoursel' an' your faither."

"Then you have more knowledge o' my affairs than I wish you to have. Where were you, Elspeth?"

"I was in the next room sortin' an' pittin' awa' the claes that wunna be needed till the cauld winds o' winter blaw."

"You are late wi' that wark, my gude Elspeth."

"Ay, I am; but wha can see till her ain wark an' the wark o' another too? Ye ken that the hoose has been that fu' o' company o' late that Katy has called upon me mair than is gude for my ain part o' the wark. But I wadna mak' complaint, an' that isna what I wush to speak o'. Noo, I wad be slow to set ony bairn against the wushes o' a parent except I saw it was my duty, an' I see nae ither way to leuk at this matter. Yon Dalziel is a bad mon, a vera bad mon. I can see that muckle i' his countenance. Noo, I wadna speak o' what is nane o' my business; but I feel that I wad ill requite the kindness o' your

mither that's awa' an' I didna cry oot ag'in' sic as he when he wad seek to win her daughter. Ye see I ken mair than I ance did; I haena lived forty an' five years for naught."

"Nae, Elspeth, you haena lived for naught. Ye hae your head well stored wi' sound sense, an' your heart hasna been neglected either; for o' all this I hae daily proof. But dinna fret about me. I wull win my way through the twa days an' give my answer as suits mysel'."

"It wull be best sae," said Elspeth wisely, "for I hae kenned merriges mony, an' I hae heard o' mony mair, that hae turned oot badly. I could tell you, an' I would; but some things wull die wi' me for a' I wull let them slip frae my tongue. There is oft a haill warld o' trouble shut up in ane woman's heart, an' mony an ane is killed by it. Still I alloo that there be happy merried folk; I micht hae tried sic a life mysel' an' Robin hadna died."

Lady Marion had no mind just then to hear the oft-repeated story of Elspeth's courtship, so she changed the subject.

Although Marion showed no anxiety in the presence of others, at night, in the solitude of her own chamber, her pent-up feelings found vent in tears and sobs; for she well knew that if she refused Dalziel it would hasten his departure and

Ainslie's also, and that neither would be likely to return. Old Elspeth had been sleeping lightly in an adjoining room. She heard the first sob and listened but a short time ere she stole softly into Marion's chamber, and laying her hand gently on her shoulder, said, "Puir lamb, puir lamb!"

"Elspeth, gude Elspeth, gang to your rest. I am sorry that I disturbed you," said Lady Marion.

"Gang to my rest, hinny, and leave you your lane? I trow not. I wad be ashamed to leuk you in the face an' I didna show that I sorrow for the sorrows o' my ain bonnie leddy. I hae come to speak to you o' Him wha is ahint a' that concerns the children o' men. Gang to God, dearie, gang to him. It is easy for him to bring licht oot o' seeming darkness. Ane wee wave o' his hand can scatter a' the clouds aboon us. I ken that it doesna always seem his wull to scatter them a' at ance. I hae waited lang mysel' to see a bit rift i' the cloudy nicht o' trouble; but it grew murkier an' murkier; the clouds didna break awa', but aboon them for ane wee minute glinted the wards, 'My grace shall be sufficient for thee.' Noo, hinny, ye canna tell what way he wull tak' to help you; but leave it i' his han' an' it wull be weel."

"I ken that, an' it comforts me. Now leave

me, gude Elspeth. I havena a doubt o' your sympathy, but I would rather be alone."

"Ye wull greet owre muckle."

"Well, I wull greet an' hae done wi' it. Tears maun fall, Elspeth. I can well believe that this warld o' ours was but young ere they began to fall. It isna the raindrops alane that water the earth. It drinks in the sweat o' the oppressed, the tears o' the sorrowing, an' the bluid o' the slain."

"Oh, my dear leddy, you are findin' oot sic things too early. Ye maunna forget that God has made a bonnie, bonnie warld; mon maistly makes the sorrow an' the trouble intil it. I wush that you could be kept frae the troubles that are abroad in it. I could find it i' my heart to wush that tears might never dim the licht in your e'e."

"Weel, gang noo an' I wunna greet; leastways, na sae sairly."

Lady Marion was true to her promise. She soon committed her care to God, as her faithful old friend had directed, and gaye herself to sleep.

The next day wore away and the second was nearing its close when Sir William called his daughter to him. "Weel," he began, "hae ye come to your senses, lass? Hoo about givin' up Ainslie an' closin' in wi' an offer warthy o' acceptance?"

"I canna wed Dalziel."

"That isna your answer?"

"Ay, that is my answer. I may repent of it, as you say, but I would be mair likely to repent an' I accepted him. That is simply impossible; I canna wed him. I hae but one life to live i' this world, an' I amaist wish that I hadna that, or that I could exchange places wi' Katy or some other serving lass, if I could be free frae the wearisome plotting and planning about matrimony."

"Gang to your ain room, Marion, and dinna leave it the nicht. Ainslie will be awa' i' the morn; an' that isna a': the dure o' my hame will be for ever closed against him."

Marion went to her own room and locked the door. Before long Elspeth was at the keyhole asking, "May I na come in?"

"Not now; an hour later you may come."

That evering Roger Ainslie missed Lady Marion and could not divine the cause of her absence until Sir William gave him to understand that his presence was no longer desired by the master of the castle.

Elspeth did not fail to be at Marion's door at the time appointed. Her mistress handed her a letter and said, "I hae something to commit to your care. Give this note to Mr. Ainslie if you can do sae without attracting attention."

The letter was delivered, and Roger Ainslie entrusted Elspeth with this message: "Tell Lady Marion that I shall never forget her, and I hope to meet her again."

When Lady Marion awoke next morning she heard voices without, and she lifted the curtain so that she could see without being seen. Dalziel and Ainslie were mounted and ready to set spurs to their horses. Ainslie's eyes were scanning the upper windows of the castle with a look of expectancy on his face that soon gave place to disappointment, and they rode away.

Marion Campbell threw herself back on her couch, saying, "I will keep my room long enough to please faither. He sent me frae him; now he will send for me ere he sees me again."

CHAPTER II.

BREAKING UP THE ESTATE.

SIR WILLIAM was very sullen after the departure of his guests. He scolded the men and kicked the dogs and seemed determined to vent his displeasure on something. The old servants remarked to each other, "The maister is that dour that he canna speak a pleasant ward to mon or beast." He was a terror to others and a trouble to himself. He missed his daughter, although he was still angry with her. As evening approached he asked Elspeth, "Is your leddy na weel?"

"Ay, she is weel; leastways, she mak's nae complaint aboot her health."

He said no more and soon retired. Elspeth was glad that he did so, and she persuaded Marion to go down and enjoy the pleasant evening breeze. The two women walked around the grounds a while. The old castle looked lovely in the moonlight, and a pang shot through Marion's heart and for a moment she was almost in sympathy with her father's plans. The walls had sheltered the Campbell family for seven generations; they

had shut out cold and heat and the prying gaze of the curious; they had shut in all that makes home a delight. Now its owner was vexed day after day by adverse circumstances, so that the dear old walls might go to strangers unless something interposed. Marion began to see how her father could fall in with any lawful plan to render him more secure in his ancient heritage. Then came the thought of the long years that she would be obliged to endure the bonds of unhappy, unblest wedlock—unhappy because of uncongeniality, unblest because underlaid with wrong motives. Then another thought came to her, that if she commenced life with such mercenary motives, her heart would in all probability grow more and more hardened through the deceitfulness of riches; she might even gain all she could desire in this life and in the end lose her own soul. Then castle walls, castle grounds, and all the ancient landmarks sank into insignificance and she grew strong—strong to meet and to struggle with poverty if need be, strong to brook her father's displeasure, perhaps vented in taunts and jeers. She looked up to the pale clouds above her and her heart went out to Him who sits above them. She breathed an earnest prayer that God would enable her to lead a pure, sweet, and noble life, to walk in his fear, and to count

his approval her chief good. 'Then speaking aloud, she said, "Let us gang in, Elspeth."

When her father sent for her the next morning she went to him pale and trembling. She was neither angry nor fearful; but she sorrowed for his disturbed mind and because he had found no place to lay down his cares and burdens. He attributed her agitation to dread of himself, and he held out his hand, saying, "Marion, child, I am not angry wi' you, leastways, not noo; but I am sae disappointed. It is maistly for your ain sake that I wish to hae our fortunes mended. Alas! the spoiler wull soon be upon us. Craggsby Castle wull soon be shorn of its ancient honors. On me an' on mine must fall the calamity."

His head bent forward as he ceased speaking. He gave his daughter's hand a gentle pressure. She returned it and then said, "Faither, we need not be wretched."

"Nae? What hae we to keep us frae it?"

"Each other and the providence of God over us."

"It is gude for you to take comfort oot o' sic thoughts. There may be somat in them."

It never occurred to Sir William that he had been the cause of sorrow to his child in sending Ainslie away so abruptly. But Marion felt no resentment. She looked down with an expression

of pitying love on the bowed head too early silvered. Her father roused himself and asked, "Do you feel equal to a long walk the morn?"

Marion consented and went to put on her bonnet. Elspeth met her in the hall and asked, "Where noo, hinny?"

"I am going to walk wi' faither."

"Hae ye made it up atween you?"

"Ay, gude Elspeth, thanks to Ane aboon."

"Thanks to him indeed." Then she added softly, "He hauds the hearts o' men."

"The morning air wull do us baith gude," remarked Sir William as he and Marion walked along. "May it gie me strength to say what maun soon be made known. I could hae held oot a while longer wi' a different prospect, but noo the worst maun come."

They walked on in silence till they came to a stile. Sir William sat down and motioned for Marion to sit beside him. Then, pointing with his cane, he said, "See ye the bonnie meadowlan' an' all that woody height ahint it?"

"Ay, faither."

"Weel, it maun gang to pay back the siller I hae borrowed frae time to time."

"We wull still hae the castle an' a' the rest o' the land with the cots upon it, wull we na?"

"Ay, for a while onyway; but I am vera

loath to sell an acre o' ground frae the estate. It wull seem sae strange, nearly a quarter o' the lan' to gang! The half o' the men maun gang tae."

"Weel, that wull cut doon our expenses."

"Ay, but that isna all. It wull cut doon oor respectability tae."

"I am but a lass, an' if I canna build up the name an' the house, you shall see that I can bear reverses without complaint."

"Can you, though? That wull be a comfort to me."

Soon after this conversation Sir William sold enough land to meet all the claims that were pressing hard upon him, but it hurt him to break up his patrimony. He became moody and sullen. Sometimes he found fault with Marion because she had disappointed his hopes, and oftener he mourned in silence. This was hard for his daughter to bear, and she tried to amuse him. She planned many a pleasant walk and ride, but she was not able to rouse him from his dejection.

During these changes no one watched Sir William more closely than did Elspeth. She thought that her master had reached a critical period in his life; that he would either go downward much faster than ever or would rise above his troubles and attain to a noble Christian manhood.

Elspeth was a woman of strong sense and still stronger devotion, and the family at Craggsby castle held a place in her heart second only to that of her God.

One morning a few weeks later, when Lady Marion and her father returned from a drive, Elspeth remarked to her mistress,

"I think that your faither's spirits are coming up a bit; he doesna seem sae muckle cast doon. It gives me great pleasure, I can tell you, for although I hae held my peace an' na meddled wi' matters too high for the likes o' me, I hae been afear'd that the maister was near-han' givin' up a'thegither."

"You are richt, Elspeth; his spirits seem mending, for which none wha are interested in his welfare should fail to be thankfu', least o' any his ain daughter."

"There is nae fear that you wunna be thankfu' sin' you hae grown sae muckle like her wha is awa'. It was a thankfu' heart that she carried within her. I believe that she wad hae been weel content wi' ony poseetion in life an' she kenned that the same was God's gude wull. Your mither aye seemed to be leukin' awa' to heaven to be led by Him wha gives wisdom to a', wha gives liberally an' upbraideth not. But I am standin' here owre lang; the new kitchen maid is but a

sorry han' at makin' a dinner. I trow that the maister's meals wadna gie him muckle satisfaction an' I didna tak' matters i' my ain han's. Noo I maun gang straight to the garden. I see that the ingons are fu' size, an' I ken weel that the maister is richt fond o' them."

When Elspeth left her, Marion let her embroidery fall into her lap and sat thinking, thinking. Her father entered the adjoining room and sat watching her. Presently he said, "Of what are you thinkin' sae intently, my lassie?"

"I canna just tell, but I think it was maistly about our twa selves, an' whether we mayna as well be happy as na to be."

"I daur say we wad live the langer for it, an' I alloo that we owe it to oorsel's. But to ken the richt isna to do it."

"That is true; but to ken the right an' then to set about trying after it wull nae doot produce gude results."

"Weel, what shall we do first?"

"If I should presume to counsel you, I would say, let us be thankful for the blessings that we hae left to us."

"That is weel said, I hae nae doot; but, Marion, you canna expect me to forget the big meadows."

"Nae, but you hae meadows left. The horses

an' the kine an' the sheep will hae plenty to eat, an' there is enough for ourselves and for the servants. Isna that muckle cause for gratitude?"

"Ay, ay, there is mony an ane mair deservin' than I am wha hasna as muckle as I hae. But, lass, I wunna want to hear the music o' the scythes yonder an' think that my men dinna handle them, nor I dinna want to hear the axes on the woodlands an' remember that auld Felix Cameron has given the ward to strike doon the trees. I tell you, lass, it is hard."

There was a perceptible tremor in his voice, and Marion felt that it had been no light thing for her father to part with a portion of his inheritance. She lifted up her heart to God, asking him to give her fitting words to answer. After a moment she spoke.

"There is another inheritance, and to mak' sure o' that we maun hold warldly riches wi' a loose grasp. You mind the question o' our Lord: 'What shall it profit a mon if he gain the whole warld an' lose his ain soul, or what wull a mon give in exchange for his soul?'"

"That is sae, that is sae. Whiles it is borne in upon my mind that there is muckle i' that. I ken weel that I canna clutch my deeds an' titles when grim daith comes for me, an' I wad like

weel to keep him at a distance. But ilka day brings him nearer; that canna be denied."

"Well, sin' it is sae, we should mak' ready to welcome him."

"Mak' ready to welcome daith, Marion?"

"Ay, we can and should welcome him, since it is he wha opens the passage-way between the twa worlds. How can we win into heaven if we dinna meet wi' daith? Do you think that he wull wear the same dark look when he comes for the saint as when he comes for the sinner? I canna think that he wull."

"It may be that he wunna; I hae niver thought o' that."

"I suppose that I hae gotten that thought frae a story that Elspeth told me. She said that ance her grandmither was up o' nights wi' twa sick folk. Ane was a very gude, the ither a very bad woman, an' the twa were sisters. Well, one night the clock had just struck twelve when she heard a rustling. She looked up an' a dark, powerful, ill-shapen figure stood by the bedside o' the sinful woman, an' in his hand he held a black wand. He beckoned wi' the wand three times, an' something as black as himself came out o' the prostrate form o' the woman an' she breathed never after. Well, twa nights after, Elspeth said it was, her grandmither was watchin' by the ither sister, but

not alane, for she was fu' o' fear, you see. She heard the same rustling, but at first she didna dare look up. When she did, a figure i' white stood there, an' it smiled on the poor, sufferin' saint. She stretched out her hands wi' a beseechin' look. The figure beckoned, an' something softly white followed, an' this woman too was nae mair in the land o' the livin'. Elspeth says that her grandmither aye believed that she had seen daith with her natural eyes, but ilka ither person wha heard her tell aboot it thought it was a dream. Elspeth thinks she was dreaming baith times, an' the lass wha was with her said that the auld dame slept till the sick woman was beyond her care—she was dead."

"I like not sic dreams; they disturb me. Daith is sic a mysterious thing, Marion. Oor friends are wi' us an' then they are awa', an' we can nae mair get a ward frae their lips than if they were stane. Did I na feel that when your mither died? I am loath to confess it, but my feelings are soft the day. How often she wad follow me to hae speech o' things that would hae been o' profit to me had I listened, but I was a puir listener. After she was dead I would hae given all that I possessed to hear that gentle voice sayin', 'William dear, hae you time to talk a bit?' But nae, there was nevermore to escape frae those lips

word nor sigh, an' o' the last I maun confess there were full mony. I was sorry it was sae, and I sat down i' the darkness beside my lifeless Isabel an' took her slender han' in my ain. It gave me a chill, but I still held it an' prayed but for ane wee sign o' forgiveness an' love. No sound was heard but the ticking o' the clock, seemin' to speak loudly, and to speak these words: 'It's a' past, it's a' past.' I couldna bear it, an' I muttered atween my teeth, 'I wull stop your lying tongue; for if she canna tell me sae, she still forgives me an' loves me.' Weel, the next morning Elspeth marvelled that the auld clock had stopped, an' I didna tell her that I had stopped it because I couldna bear to hear it."

Both Sir William and his daughter were in tears, but they did not long indulge them. "I said a while ago," said Sir William, wiping his eyes, "that daith is a mysterious thing; sae is life mysterious. We gang the same round—eat, drink, sleep, wark, an' live, maistly for creature comforts—till daith comes to change all. Weel, so it wull be till the end o' the warld."

"Yes," answered Marion, and she repeated the words of our Lord, "'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man.'"

CHAPTER III.

DALZIEL'S SECOND VISIT.

SIR WILLIAM was not always in the repentant mood in which we found him in the last chapter. He was groping after truth and he had some aspirations after a better life, but his mind was not fixed. He was wavering between a love of that which is seen and temporal and that which is unseen and eternal. Three years passed, leaving him in a state of unrest. Especially did he chafe each year when the time of haymaking came around. He would say, "Auld Felix is at those meadows again," and he would be miserable until the last load of hay disappeared from his sight.

About this time Malcolm Dalziel again came to the castle. He said to Sir William, "I hae come to try my luck again. Perhaps Lady Marion wull change her mind when she kens what I hae to tell her."

"What can you tell her that wull wark sic a change?"

"You ken that she liked Ainslie well."

"It may be that she did, puir lass; but what o' him?"

"Weel, he is dead an' gone; leastways he set oot to cross over to Belfast in an auld craft that was mair like a cockleshell than a vessel; but he couldna hae made the port, for he hasna been heard frae."

"You dinna tell me sae?"

"Ay, but I do. He has gone doon, that is sure, or the bairns wad hae had news frae him."

"What bairns, Dalziel?"

"His brither's bairns. You ken that the brither was a merchant in Belfast. Weel, he died six months since an' left a lad an' a lass; their mither has been dead mony a year. Folk said that his business was in a bad state, an' the bairns were sent to Roger. There was naething left but some household gear that had belonged to Roger's mither. He was loath to give it up, an' set out to bring it hame in the cheapest way, but I am thinking it was a dear way to him, puir lad. I maun say that I liked Roger Ainslie. If it had been another man who stood in my way as he did here, I dinna ken what I wad hae dune wi' him."

"I marvelled hoo you could feel sae friendly towards him."

"Weel, he saved my life, you ken."

"Nae, I didna ken that. Hoo was it?"

"It was when we were lads at school. Ains-

lie was aye a douce laddie; he didna care for the cup, you ken."

"Ay," assented Sir William.

"Weel," continued Dalziel, "I was pretty weel fuddled one night, that is, for a lad, an' as I was about to cross a bridge on the way hame Ainslie came up on the other side. I lost my balance and I pitched doon in the deep waters. I thought I heard him cry oot, 'God help me!' an' God maun hae helped him, for he found me an' helped me ashore. Do you wonder noo that we were friends?"

"Nae," said Sir William; "you did weel to remember him. An' noo he lies aneath the waters himsel', puir wight!"

"Sae it seems. Weel, I couldna save him, but I think I maun do something for those bairns. They were dependent on Roger for their support."

The reader will not be surprised that Dalziel's second attempt to win Marion was no more successful than the first. Sir William was more than half persuaded that it was his right to insist upon Marion's acceptance of his hand. But his daughter answered quietly, "I gave my answer years ago, an' I hae nae mind to change it."

If Dalziel felt any resentment he restrained it, and almost made Marion his friend by his seeming interest in the Ainslie children. Before he

left he obtained Sir William's consent to receive the children for a while at the castle, urging that the country air would do them much good. He left a few pounds in advance as a proof that he intended to meet the expense of the experiment.

He was scarcely out of sight ere Sir William entered into a conversation with his daughter that ended in a stormy discussion, for he was angry at her refusal of Dalziel. "It is too bad, Marion, that you are sae self-willed. You canna care muckle for your auld faither. I am sair pressed even noo for a hundred pounds, an' where is it to come frae? Yes," he repeated, raising his voice, "I say, where are the hundred pounds to come frae?"

Nurse Elspeth was sewing by the window during this conversation. Suddenly dropping her work she left the room, and returned soon with a heavy purse in her hand, which she held out to her master, saying, "Here are a hundred pounds in gude Scots' money. Ye are welcome to its use free o' charge."

"But, Elspeth, I maunna take your hard-earned siller."

"Troth an' you maun, maister. What is siller to me in comparison wi' the peace o' my dear leddy?"

Sir William stood thinking and Elspeth turned

to go away, but her master held out the purse and repeated, "Nae, nae, Elspeth, I canna take your siller."

"Take it for the present onyway, sin' you are in need. I hope you may never take a favor from onybody less wullin' to accommodate than Elspeth Lundie, your ain humble servant."

Marion went to her own apartment, her heart filled with conflicting emotions. Here was another strong proof of Elspeth's devotion, for Marion knew how carefully her old servant had hoarded her earnings. Her heart was sad for the disappointment of her father; but more than all she sorrowed for the untimely fate of Ainslie. She never realized till that moment how deep and strong had been her feelings for him.

"Puir tossed heart!" said Elspeth as Marion left the room.

Sir William felt ashamed that his servant had heard him speak so severely to his daughter, but he also experienced a feeling of relief that he was now enabled to meet his obligations.

"Elspeth is a gude soul; it wad be weel for me an' I were as gude," was his mental comment.

That evening Lady Marion sought Elspeth and said, "I am come to you, gude Elspeth; I am lonely by mysel'."

"Puir lamb, I ken weel the heart o' you is sair. Eh, do I na ken it? Only those wha hae experienced sic trouble can understand it. Robin has been dead mair than a score o' years, an' though I hae long since learned submission, I haena learned to forget."

"Tell me about your sorrow, Elspeth," said Marion, rightly judging that her faithful servant hoped that some comfort might be brought to her young mistress from hearing how another was helped in a similar distress.

So Elspeth began her story, being very explicit at the outset. "Weel," she said, "ye ken somat o' it already, hoo we twa, Robin an' mysel', were brought up together at my uncle's. We were baith related to them, but frae different sides. Robin was nae relation to the Lundies; he was nephew to uncle's wife. Weel, when we were sma' where ane went the ither went, an' as we grew aulder we still felt that we maun be to-gither. But there came a time when we didna rightly understand each ither. You see we were nae langer bairns. I wad rin oot o' his way an' then weary for his company. Ance he said to me, 'Elspeth, ye are owre quiet o' late; ye dinna speak wi' me as you were wont. Hae ye ony reasons for it? What hae I dune? tell me.' An' I answered, 'I hae nae reasons, but we arena langer

bairns, an' folk change wi' the years that come to them.' He made reply, 'That is sae; but, Elspeth, dear lass, you maunna change an' turn awa' frae me. You hae been a true friend to me, an' noo I am countin' on you mair than iver before. You are grawin' womanly, an' I am glad to see it, but you maunna draw back within yoursel' sae muckle, or I may graw to think that you dinna care for me.' Then after a bit he said, 'Nae, I wunna believe that.' Then he kissed my cheek an' laughed because I blushed. 'It is a' right, Elspeth, is it na?' I answered him never a ward, an' he took my hand, sayin', 'This wee hand is mine, and I wunna mak' you blush ony langer. Honestly, Elspeth, it wull pit us baith mair at oor ease to hae this matter settled.' I leuked up an' smiled. 'That is richt, sweetheart,' he said. 'I kenned you wad be mine.'

"It was as he had said. I was mair at my ease after that, an' the days an' the months an' the years flew by sae quickly that I couldna believe that they were gane. Weel, I like not to tell the rest o' the story," and a visible shudder passed over Elspeth as she paused for a moment. "I never saw him in better spirits than on that last morn. He went to fell trees to build a little cot for himsel' and for me. He leuked back at me—eh, my leddy, I can see that smile still—an' he

said, 'I shall wark weel the day, Elspeth; love shall give strength to my arms.' Ah, me, this warld has its scenes that grief embalms in oor memories! You ken it was the limb o' a tree that struck Robin an' killed him. Dinna ask me mair. I canna stand it even noo. 'That awfu' cut, that bleeding heid!'

"Elspeth, I dinna wonder that you canna forget it. The Lord maun hae helped you to live through sic an' affliction."

"He did, he did, an' he gi'ed me a gude freend i' my dear, sweet Cousin Agnes. Noo that mak's me think it wad be gude for yoursel' an' you had a young lady o' quality to stop a bit wi' you. I wush your faither wad fetch ane o' your cousins or ane o' your freends; there is nae tellin' hoo it might cheer you up to hae company. There is Lady Annie, your mither's kinswoman; I dinna doot but she wad come to stay wi' you."

"Dinna, gude Elspeth; you think better o' that plan than I do. Lady Annie wad see too much change at Craggsby Castle, an' it wad fret me mair than it would soothe me to hae her come. Nae, Elspeth, I wull leuk awa' to the hills frae whence cometh my help. When I am helped frae thence I shall be helped indeed."

"You are richt there, hinny, as you maistly

are. I nicht hae kenned that you needed nae advice frae me."

"But I do need advice frae you. I hae profited by it mony times. But for some things that I dinna like to mention your plan wad be a gude ane. I wull content mysel' wi' the company o' my faither an' my ain thoughts till the bairns come; they may afford me some diversion. Hoo auld are they, think you, Elspeth?"

"I didna hear tell."

"Weel, I hope that they wull be gude, pleasant children."

The candle had burned low, and Elspeth, in spite of herself, had yawned several times and showed other signs of fatigue.

"You are weary, gude Elspeth," said Marion.
"I wull gang noo an' leave you to your rest."

As Lady Marion went to her room she settled herself in a large chair and looked about her with a feeling of solitude, the apartment seemed so large and empty. "Oh," thought she, "if I had a sister to be my companion through the weary years to come!" She shuddered as she thought of Ainslie under the waters, and she resolved to cherish his memory as long as her own life should last. She recalled his last words to her, "Tell her I shall never forget her, and I hope to meet her again."

“Not in this world, Roger dear,” she murmured, “and the other world seems sae distant, sae shrouded in mystery. Oh, to clasp your warm, friendly, loving hand again! But I may not; my life maun e’en wear on wi’ but ane hope, the hope of doing weel my duties. God gie me grace na to repine at his ain providence.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE AINSLIE BAIRNS.

IN due time the "Ainslie bairns" arrived. Elspeth had been wondering how it would seem to have children in the house once more, and Lady Marion hoped that they would help to dispell the awful stillness that she felt in every part of the castle. Neither did Sir William feel wholly indifferent towards them; and when he saw the tall, manly-looking lad of sixteen and his shy, sweet-faced sister, but two years younger, he was agreeably disappointed. He had thought from Dalziel's description that they were small, sickly children needing nursing and care; but he saw at once that they need not have been sent in search of health. He noticed, too, that they came prepared to stay a long time. The thought just crossed his mind that there might be some trick about the matter, but he banished the thought at once; he would not think so meanly of Dalziel. He concluded that all was right, and he had no objection to the children's making a lengthened stay since he was likely to be well paid for it. His mental comment was not unlike this:

“Folk wull most likely gie me credit for keeping the bairns for naething, an’ at the same time I wull be putting a gude bit in my pocket. Weel, the old sayin’ is true, ‘It is an ill wun that blaws naebody gude.’ If puir Ainslie has gane doon aneath the waters, it is like to be the means o’ helpin’ me.”

While Sir William had been occupied with his thoughts, Elspeth had greeted the children with warm, honest words of welcome. Lady Marion caught a glimpse of them across the hall, and she heard Elspeth ask, “Weel, my laddie, what may your name be?”

“Roger Ainslie,” he answered.

Again Lady Marion looked on the boy, and the resemblance between him and his uncle was so striking that she sat down on her chair unable to move. Here Elspeth found her some moments later.

“Come awa’, my leddy, an’ see doesna the lad leuk like—Why, what is the matter, hinny? Are you na weel?”

“Ay, I am weel, but I feel a bit faint.”

“I ken. I wish Elspeth Lundie could help you bear your troubles, puir lamb. Then that leuk wadna come sae often in your face.”

“Elspeth, hae you na had your ain share o’ troubles?”

"Please God, I hae; but it amaist rives my heart i' twain to see you sae cast doon." Changing the subject, she said, "Yon is a sweet, bonnie lass; Marjorie, her name is. That was the name o' an early friend o' mine. Weel, I maun awa' noo."

Lady Marion, thinking that the children might miss a welcome from her, now came forward in her sweet, winning way and spoke a few words of greeting. She loved both Roger and his sister from that moment and thanked Providence that they had been sent to Craggsby Castle. She thought not of the money to be paid for their stay; she thought only that they were kindred of him she had loved, him she must still love. She spoke soft, gentle words to Marjorie till she lost her shy look and turned a pair of deep gray eyes full on her new friend. Lady Marion held out her hand and said, "Come wi' me."

Marjorie obeyed, and clasping Marion's hand, said in her sweet simplicity, "I love you weel."

"Do you, indeed? Weel, that is a right pleasant thing to hear."

As they walked over the grounds the child manifested her delight at every new turn. "Sic a rare burnie yon is, loupin' doon the brae, an' sic a bonnie linn. Wha ever saw sae mony trees? My, but you maun be happy here, sweet leddy!"

"Wull you be happy here, think you?"

"I dinna ken. I hae aye been happy till o' late, when we hae had trouble; an' Roger says that more maun follow. Roger is a wise lad. I amna wise; I canna leuk ahead. But then," she went on, lowering her voice, "I ken that God does that for me, sae why need I?"

"Why, indeed, dear bairn? You have already learned a lesson o' trust that mony an ane wi' gray hairs has failed to learn. Sae I maun think that you are wise after all."

All day the words of the child lingered in the mind of Lady Marion. "Here is a lesson of trust for me," she thought. "After all, the wisest folk are those wha take God at his ward an' rest in it."

When they returned, Lady Marion scanned the face of the lad, and with the clew that Marjorie had given her she read him thoroughly. He was sad and thoughtful beyond his years. He appreciated kindness and smiled his gratitude; but immediately the smile would die away and the grave, serious look would come back to his countenance. He seemed ill at ease and from some few words that he dropped Marion guessed the cause: he was afraid that it had not been right to come to Cragsby Castle. And this fear became stronger as time wore on and no tidings

came from Dalziel. Sir William became sullen and began to fear that he had been duped. Matters were in this state when a letter came from Dalziel stating that he was about to leave Scotland for ever. Sir William was welcome to the Ainslie children, and he wished him joy with them.

It is hard to say what might have happened had not Roger offered to take the place of a servant on the farm and so pay his indebtedness. Marjorie was proud of his courage, and she offered her services to Elspeth.

Sir William had been running in debt again, but, depending on Dalziel's liberality, he had hoped to meet some of his obligations. Now that hope being cut off, nothing remained for him to do but to dispose of more real estate. At this juncture Lady Marion came to the front and stood shoulder to shoulder with her father. She proposed the sale of the carriage horses, her own pony and saddle, together with many other valuable things within the castle. She dismissed all the servants within the house except Elspeth, and she was hardly considered a servant.

"I shall wark wi' my ain hands; what else were they made for?" she asked her father when he remonstrated. But he answered, "Is it na eneuch that auld Felix wull hae the best horses

an' mony a pleasant thing that we hae loved to leuk on, withoot him knowing that we hae scarcely a mon or a maid servant left? Nae, I wull sell the land, I tell you, lass."

"Weel, sell the land forbye an' let us be free o' debt. I can bide onything but giving up the castle an' the land that is nearest it."

"Ye hae weel said, daughter. It shall be dune; then we wull live within oor income, an' the Ainslie bairns shall bide wi' us an' serve us."

It took but a short time to conclude the business. Felix Cameron obtained another coveted field and whatever goods were disposed of. Sir William nerved himself to pass through the ordeal, and when it was over he said, "There, Marion, I am glad it is dune. Another thing I am thankfu' for: auld Felix wunna drive past here vera often, sae I shanna see my beasties doin' his bidding. Noo, Elspeth, you shall hae the interest on your money an' part o' the principal. I wush that I could pay it a'; but I canna do sae noo withoot inconvenience."

"That you ken well I wunna pit you to an' I wad never get the siller again. But, gin I may mak' sae bold, is ivery ither obligation blotted oot? because if it isna, ye maunna pay me onything."

"Ay, Elspeth, a' is paid, thank God!"

"Thank God, indeed, maister, that ye hae sae muckle left. Of course it mak's but little aboot the like o' me compared wi' gran' folks; but God, wha is nae respecter o' persons, has heard my prayers, in that Craggsby Castle is oot o' the clutches o' auld Felix or ony ither body."

Sir William could not repress a smile at the change that Elspeth's feelings seemed to have undergone during her last remark, and he added, "Ay, the castle an' mony a gude acre still belong to us, an' luck wull hae to go vera hard wi' me afore I mak' ony mair debt."

Marion drew a long breath, and said, "I am sae glad that what is left is clear. I dinna like to feel under obligation to ony ane."

Roger Ainslie proved to be good help, and but three men-servants remained besides him. Old Stephen Watson was the foreman, and he lived in a cottage near the castle. Stephen did not hear the above conversation; however, he had his own thoughts in regard to his master's affairs.

On the evening that the horses were led away old Stephen sat in his accustomed place in his cottage, but he was wholly unlike himself. His bonnet was settled over his eyes and not a word escaped him for the space of two hours. Hannah, his wife, broke the silence by saying, "Gude-mon, ye needna be that dour that ye canna speak

to me. I had naething to do wi' the sale o' the beasties."

"I ken that weel enough, neither do I feel angry wi' you aboot onything; but ye maun alloo that it is but natural that I should grieve for the beasties. It wasna enough that the span o' blacks had to gang, but Rory, oor leddy's pony, is sold tae, the bonniest beast i' a' the parts aboot. Puir thing! the last thing that he did was to nibble at my han' for the sweet morsel he was wont to find there. Eh! but the clatter of their hoofs rings intil my ears still."

"It is tae bad, tae bad. Hoo came the mais-ter's property to rin doon sae? I am sure that you hae always kept an eydent han' to the wark. Folk counted Sir William lucky that he had sic a foreman, for it is weel kenned that you are gude at planning."

"It may be as you say, Hannah, but it isna muckle that a faithfu' servant can do when ance his maister's affairs get sae badly entangled, you ken. The mischief was maistly dune afore my time, an' afore Sir William's tae, for that maitter. His faither handled property badly, sae I am tauld, an' he died vera suddent. He was aye given to muckle wine, an' ance when his wife, Lady Grissel, interfered, the butler didna bring his bottle. Weel, he gaed into the wine-cellar

for it himsel', an' there he saw a wraith, an' o' course he died soon after."

"Noo, Stephen, you dinna believe that a mon sees his ain ghaist?"

"Weel, maybe na. His heid was amaist likely bad wi' the wine that he had taken already, for it was weel on i' the evening and he had taken fu' plenty. But whether he saw his wraith or nae, his time had come. He had bad debts, as was then found oot, an' mony shifts an' turns were made to haud the property thegither. If Sir William were never sae gude a manager, he wad hae his han's fu', see ye?"

"Well, neither has he managed ony o' the best."

"Ye are richt there. He isna sae vera gude nor sae vera bad at managing; aboot middling is he. But noo he is even in the world; leastways, I think sae. Ye ken I hae been driving aboot wi' him o' late, an' I hear a ward here an' anither there; sae, as near as I can mak' oot, a' that he hauds noo is free frae debt."

"Weel, that is gude. I amaist feared for the castle itsel' an' oor ain wee cot tae. Thae Ainslie bairns, wull they wark the maister gude or ill, think you?"

"Gude, wifie, gude, I am sure. You should see hoo yon Roger handles his wark. Ane wad

think that he was broughten up to it. He is a handy lad, I can tell you, an' I am tauld that the lass stands side by side wi' Elspeth."

"Ay, she does; that I hae seen wi' my ain e'en. Weel, let us hoop that the maister wull prosper noo, though his estate has been cut awa' on baith sides."

"I think he wull. A' we hae to do is to pit the crops in weel an' to gather them weel, an' there wull be enough for necessary expenses. I think that we an' a' the maister's folk micht heave a gude lang breath an' say, 'The gude Lord be praised that a' is as weel as it is.'"

"I think sae tae, Stephen. But puir Leddy Marion, accordin' to what I hae seen, she maun hae lo'ed him wha was drowned. I see that she is fond o' Marjorie an' doesna like her to wark hard."

"The lad Roger looks amazin' like his uncle. I wad ken, an' I hadna been tauld, that they were near o' kin."

"Thae bairns wull fare weel, gin Leddy Marion has the handlin' o' the property. I think, after a', that that bad mon—what do you ca' him?"

"Dalziel?"

"Ay, Dalziel; well, I think, after a', that there was a providence i' his bringin' the bairns

to the castle. What for a rearin' wad he gi'e them, an' ane o' them a lassie, tae! Weel, oor Heavenly Faither oft brings gude oot o' seemin' evil."

"Ay, that is sae, an' it is hard to calculate hoo muckle dependence they may be to the maister. Roger may be as a son an' the staff o' his declinin' years. He sallna want for instruction i' farmin' an' I can gi'e it to him; for before mony years my wark wull be dune. Besides, I like the lad for his ain sake, an' he is as tender-hearted as a lass. Ye should hae seen the leuk upon his face when Rory was dragged awa'. I maun say dragged, for it was naething less. I didna ken yestere'en, when oor leddy came back frae a ride upon Rory's back, that it wad be her last ride upon the gentle beast; but she maun hae kenned it, for as I led him awa' to the stable she said, 'Gi'e Rory gude care the nicht, Stephen.' Weel, to gang back to Roger, he stood there this mornin' an' he said, 'Alas, gude Watson, I feel as if I were bringin' ill-luck to the castle; but gin God wull gi'e me his favor, I wull help mend oor fortunes for this sweet leddy's sake.' Weel, Hannah, I couldna leave the lad to think that, sae I tauld him that he hadna brought the ill-luck, that the property had been rinnin' back for a lang time."

“That was but richt. I think that the lad is tae serious-like, onyway.”

“He could scarcely be otherwise; he has passed through troubles sic as few lads o’ his age hae ony knowledge o’.”

“Weel, troubles wull come upon a’ the human family, it seems; but it leuks sae hard when the heids o’ youth an’ childhood maun be bowed doon by it. But, Stephen, we maun stan’ back an’ na meddle wi’ maitters tae high for us. Ye mind that Ane wha had muckle mair right to question said, ‘Even, sae, Faither, for sae it seems gude i’ thy sight.’”

CHAPTER V.

THE BLACK LINN.

ONE evening late in autumn the rain was falling almost in torrents. Within the castle the inmates drew closer to the fire and shuddered as the cold storm beat against the windows.

"This is a richt gude nicht for a ghaist-story, Elspeth," said Marjorie.

"I wad say that it was a nicht to try to think o' something pleasant," Elspeth quickly replied.

"I dinna ken, Elspeth," spoke up Sir William; "we might as well be in sympathy wi' the elements. Use as muckle imagination as you can, you canna think to smell the hawthorne the nicht. Sae ye may as weel gi'e in to Marjorie."

"Marjorie maunna think that I hae a ghaist-story at the end o' my tongue the haill time. An', moreover, she kens as weel as I do that I dinna believe ane ward o' them. I wad muckle rather she wad gang to the Ward o' God an' read the mony true stories that it has between the lids o' it."

"Noo, Elspeth, hae nae mair words about it. You ken you may as well gi'e the lass a story as

nae. Mind, she has no lassies o' her age for company an' na muckle to help her pass awa' the time."

"Weel, let me think a bit. Hae you iver heard the story o' the Black Linn?"

All present answered in the negative, and Elspeth began: "Lang, lang ago, when life was held a bit cheaper than it is noo, there lived twa cousins wha loved the same lass. Ane nicht they met by agreement and fought upon a high precipice aboon the Black Linn. Weel, their jealousy was that bitter that the ane wadna gi'e up an' the ither wadna gi'e up, till ane o' them got his daith-blow. Then first their anger began to abate. The puir lad wha was sae badly hurted bethought him to put up a prayer to God for his soul, an' the ane wha had dealt the deadly blow calmed doon his rage an' hate an' cried, 'Geordie, Geordie, dinna dee!'

"The dyin' mon turned his e'e upon him an' replied, 'I canna help but dee, Jock; but you maunna be hung, lad, for it was I wha gave the challenge.'

"Jock sat doon by Geordie an' took his bluid-stained han' i' his ain, an' said, 'Geordie, we hae been freends iver since we were bit laddies; hoo could we turn foes an' be guilty o' sic wickedness?'

“‘Hoo, indeed?’ answered Geordie, an’ he never spake mair.

“Jock fell upon his face, that he nichtna see his cousin dee, an’ he wept sairly for a lang time, an’ when he leuked up Geordie was dead. What was now to be dune? Beneath was the Black Linn, an’ it took Jock but a minute to push Geordie’s puir limp, lifeless body in it. Jock looked doon, but when he saw the white face upon the black water he turned an’ fled wi’ speed. He said to himsel’, ‘I hope he wull be found, an’ then folk wull think that he fell into the linn; for naebody kenned that we gaed awa’ thegither. But God kens it, an’ he may bring it to licht,’ he added, an’ slackened his steps, sae he wadna be seen rinnin’ frae the Black Linn.

“Weel, dear knows the hardest o’ it maun yet be tauld. Auld Betty Bruce, the widowed mither o’ the dead lad, waited lang an’ late that nicht for Geordie’s return. The white deal table stood upon the floor wi’ Geordie’s supper spread, an’ she wondered muckle that he stayed sae late. At last she said, ‘He maun hae gone to see his sweetheart. Weel, that is the way it gaes; lads an’ lasses hae aye wedded, an’ they aye wull, sae lang as the warld stands. I wull hae to alloo that anither has a better claim upon him than I hae mysel’.’ Soon she laid hersel’ doon

to sleep, an' when she awoke at daybreak she rose up quickly an' called her son, thinkin' that he had come in an' gone to his bed. But what was her surprise when she found that he hadna come hame at a'. Weel, the hours passed awa', an' of coorse nae Geordie came. Then auld Betty sought oot his cousin Jock an' asked him if he kenned onything o' Geordie. An' Jock axed his aunt Betty many questions, but he didna answer hers.

“‘I thocht for sure that you wad ken something o' him, Jock!’ she said, an' she fell a-greetin' an' a-lamentin' an' besought Jock to gang an' leuk for his cousin; for she wist not, puir auld dame, that there had been ony rivalry atween the twa. Jock consented to gang, and his mither bade her sister hope for the best an' dootless a' wad be weel. ‘Mayhap he wull be hame when you gang there,’ she said.

“Weel, thrice ilka day did the troubled woman seek Jock an' ask if he hadna found her Geordie. Nearly a week later a shepherd caught sight o' the figure o' a mon lyin' on the border o' the Black Linn. He gaed to it, an' there he found Geordie Bruce, his claes caught upon a limb o' a tree that lay prone on the linn-side. Then what sorrow filled the heart o' Betty Bruce nane can tell except those wha hae had a like tribu-

lation. 'Hoo could he gang sae near the dreadfu' linn, an' he the only son o' his mither!' she cried. 'Oh, that He wha had compassion on the widow o' Nain were here!' Weel, she gaed on sae that Jock couldna stan' it, an' Katy, that was the lass they both loved, grat heavily at the funeral o' Geordie. Jock's heart was as heavy as stane, and he amaist wished himsel' i' Geordie's place.

"After that sad day was over Jock tauld his faither an' his mither that he was goin' to bide wi' his aunt Betty an' be a son to her, an' nae-thing could dissuade him. He took Geordie's place an' he slept in his bed, an' the story gaes that ane nicht Geordie came to him an' tauld him that he maun come to the Black Linn each year on the anniversary o' the day that they fought there. If he didna come, he wadna leave him i' peace. Sae Jock gaed to that awful tryst at the appointed time, nae matter hoo foul the weather was an' hoo weary he felt. He gaed oot by stealth i' the dead o' the night, an' folk said he aye met wi' Geordie.

"Weel, he was aye a sorrowfu' mon. He never spake wi' Katy mair than to gie her the time o' day, at which she marvelled, for she loved Jock as weel as Geordie. Had the puir lass kenned which lad she loved best, there wad hae

been nae question between them. But Jock didna seem to care for her or ony ither lass. He lived wi' his aunt Betty Bruce till she died, an' then he lived alane, an' the neebors wad shake their heids an' say hoo he missed his cousin an' hoo he had niver been the same since Geordie was drowned.

“Weel, twenty years after Jock was vera sick, sick on the nicht that he maun gang to the Black Linn. There was a friend sitting by him, an' Jock axed what day o' the month it was, an' when he was tauld he leuked terribly worrited. He oft strived to rise to his feet, but he couldna, an' when at last he fell asleep it was frae sheer weariness. He hadna slept lang when he started up, saying, ‘Gang awa’, Geordie, for peety sake, gang! Did you na ken I couldna win to the Black Linn? It isna fair o’ you, Geordie; hae I na met wi’ you ilka time till noo when I canna? Hae peety on a puir bedridden mon. Did you na say that I maunna be hanged? Did you na say that it was mair your faut than mine? Gang oot wi’ that pale face; it is paler noo than when I pushed you i’ the linn. If you wunna gang, I maun close my e’en. Eh! but I canna shut you oot. What mair can I do? Did I na live wi’ your mither? Did I na gi’e up Katy an’ live a lanely mon? Oh, my God! my sin wunna let me rest, an’ it seems that

I canna atone for it. Is there nae forgi'eness wi' thee?"

"That vera nicht he died, an' the friend that was wi' him, when he saw that it was daith, called in anither mon, an' the twa talked it over while puir Jock lay a-dyin'. 'Murder wull oot,' said the ane wha had heard Jock rave, an' he tauld the ither a' that he had heard. They didna dream that the sick mon paid ony attention to onything i' this warld; but he opened his e'en an' wi' fast failin' breath confessed his sin, an' said, 'I am glad that it is tauld; I wull die easier noo.'

"Naebody felt to be hard upon Jock's memory, for they said, 'The poor wight has suffered enough even in this warld.'

"Noo I hae tauld my story, wha is the better for it?" concluded Elspeth.

"Naebody wull be the waur for it; for wha minds the story wull also mind that punishment aye follows sin. An' if some ignorant folk believe in ghaists, it may keep them frae doin' a foul deed some time," said Sir William.

"That may be sae," assented Elspeth, "but I like not to hae ony ane believe that after the soul has gaen into the ither warld an' received its sentence frae Him wha has a' power, it can win its way back to trouble ony ane. It wasna Geor-

die's ghaist at a', but puir Jock's tormentin' conscience."

"Well, onyway it was a richt good story, an' thank you, Elspeth," said Marjorie.

"Noo, then, lass, if you like you may listen to a bit story that I wull relate o' my ain free wull; for I love it, as it shows the transforming power o' the grace o' God.

"Ane o' my earliest recollections is o' auld blin' Alan Dunmore. He lived but a mile an' a half frae my hame, an' puir as we were, mither oft sent him a wee gift, for he was supported by charity alane. It was when I was sent on sic errands that I heard the wards that even noo come to me wi' sic power when I feel cast doon.

"But blin' Alan wasna always a gude mon; far frae it. Ance he was a bad, thievin', drinkin', swearin', leein' mon. He wad mak' oath to a lee as lief as na. Weel, aue day he had tauld a muckle lee, an' it had been cast i' his teeth that it was a lee. He answered wi' these dreadfu' wards: 'It is as true as the gospel; and if it isna, I hope that the Lord wull strike me blin'.' His blin'ness came upon him sae soon after that folk thought his wicked prayer had been answered. Aweel, if the licht was shut oot o' his natural e'en, anither licht filled his spiritual e'en. Nae sooner did he ken that God's han' was upon him than he gi'ed up,

an', like Saul o' Tarsus, cried oot axin' what he maun do. An auld faithfu' servant o' God pointed oot the way for him to become reconciled to Him against whom he had sinned sae grievously. The puir auld mon, shut in by darkness, groped after the 'straight an' narrow way that leadeth to iverlasting life.'

"When I think o' that auld mon and his feeble wife, an' when I think o' their faith an' cheerfu'ness an' submission, I feel to hide my heid wi' shame. Naething seemed to worry them. They just cast their care upon Him wha had promised to care for them. Ane time they were twa haill days withoot food except a handfu' o' meal that the auld dame made into thin parritch. When the last drop o' that was gane they betook themsel's to prayer, an' though faint in body they were strong in spirit. It was simmer-time and the dure stood open a bit. A neebor was passin', an' he thought to step in a minute an' see auld Alan, but when he came to the dure, there was auld Alan doon on his knees, his bald pow bowed in prayer. The neebor pu'ed off his ain bonnet an' stood an' listened, an' this was what he heard :

" 'Dear Lord, forbid that we should set oor heart too muckle upon creature comfort or murmur that we haena the "meat that perisheth," sin' we hae the heavenly manna an' the water

which is a "well o' water springin' up into iverlastin' life." Nathless, let it please thee to send a morsel to strengthen oor frail bodies. "Gi'e us this day oor daily bread." This maun be in accordance wi' thy wull, sin' thy dear Son our Saviour bid us pray after this manner. Grant this oor request, that we maunna distrust thee for ane wee minute. Hear oor prayer alane for Jesus' sake. Amen.'

"The neebor-mon stepped softly awa', gaed hame, an' came back wi' a pock on his back an' a basket on his airm. He set them doon before the dure an' gaed awa' ahint the house to watch their surprise.

"The day was amaist spent when the dame started to gang to the bit spring. 'Thank God, we hae the water,' she said, and Alan chimed in, 'Ay, an' oor bread sall be sure.' Weel, as he said this the auld dame stood at the dure an' she cried oot wi' joy, 'Ay, Alan, here is a muckle pock amaist fu' an' a basket forbye. Isna oor God a prayer-hearin' an' a prayer-answerin' God!'

"'Ay, ay; praised be his name!' answered auld Alan."

CHAPTER VI.

ROGER AINSLIE.

ROGER AINSLIE had been at the castle two years, but he was still considered a "strange lad." He was silent without being sullen, unobtrusive without being diffident, faithful without expecting praise, and friendly without asking for friendship. He expected nothing, unless it were a tacit acknowledgment that his labor was well performed. He possessed more than the usual amount of self-reliance, and although known to be sad, he never troubled any one with complaints. He loved his sister fondly, and on her he bestowed many marks of affection, but he seldom talked much with her. She would often watch for him and run to meet him and tell him something fresh and warm from her sunny heart, for which she would receive one of his swift half smiles and a pressure of the hand.

Old Stephen Watson thought that Roger must be a strange lad since he had made a friend of an old dog named Snap. The dog had justly received this name, for he was accustomed to snarl and bite after every one, and he was only suffered

to remain upon the premises because he was a good watch-dog. That Snap should become attached to any one was such a marvel to Stephen Watson that he often remarked, "Weel, it does beat a' that I iver did see. I never kenned that brute, frae a puppy, to mak' friends wi' ony livin' mortal. He isna only quiet when Roger is by him, but he is as gentle an' as couthie as ane could wish."

Sir William also noticed the strange attachment, nor was he slower than his dog to recognize real worth; the manly reserve and the fidelity of the youth soon won for him the admiration of his master.

One evening Sir William lingered outside the door watching Roger as he sat reading in the lessening twilight until he strained even his young eyes, while Snap lay quietly beside him, often receiving a pat on his grizzled head. Sir William approached nearer, and said, "Come, laddie, put up your buik; it's owre late for ony eyes save a wizard's to mak' oot ane ward frae anither i' this light." Then, smiling, he added, "I dinna ken but you *hae* some magic aboot you, sin' Snap follows you around sae."

Roger smiled, rose, and closed his book and offered his master the seat.

"Keep your seat, laddie; I wull find anither.

I dinna ken muckle aboot wark, but I think ane maun be limb-weary if na foot-sair after he has followed the plough a' day. What buik hae you?"

"Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare, lad? Weel, a lad that wull moil faithfully an' wullingly frae sunrise till sunset, an' then read Shakespeare i' the gloaming, wull likely ane day do greater things than the taming o' snarling curs."

There was silence for a little time, and then Sir William spoke again: "You are a strange lad, an' I like you the better because you arena like maist ither young men. There is mair diversity in folk than I used to think for, an' I am thinking whether it isna mair caused by the pressure o' circumstance than frae ony bent o' their ain. Hae you a thought upon the subject?"

"I hae thought muckle aboot that vera thing, an' I canna settle it i' my mind whether men mak' circumstances or circumstances mak' men. But I am inclined to think that circumstances mak' men what they are, sin' I seem to be hedged in by them."

"Then if you could mak' arrangements to suit yoursel' you wad, I suppose, mark oot a different course?"

"I think I should; and yet, if a' is arranged

by a wise Providence, I wadna like to choose my ain course."

"Weel, if a' is ordered, you canna choose for yoursel'. I begin to think that it was a wise ordering that sent you here, though a liar maun seem to be the agent o' it."

Roger quickly replied, "Are you then glad that we came here?"

"Ay, I feel glad noo, an' I dinna believe that I shall soon change my mind. I amaist wish that you were my ain son."

Roger, the undemonstrative Roger, came near, seated himself at the old man's feet, looked up in his face, and said, "I give you muckle thanks for what you hae tauld me. I shall carry a lighter heart to my daily toil."

Sir William laid an unsteady hand on Roger's uncovered head, saying huskily, "We are nae mair maister an' servant; we are friends. Roger, lad, it has aye been my great grief that I haena a son. Bide wi' me, laddie; gang in an' oot afore me, an' you shall be to me as a son. Toil ye maun, for siller is at low ebb wi' us, but dinna overdo your strength. Wark isna a curse, but idleness is. I wish, as I leuk over my fields, that I had left on them the sweat o' toil."

Roger took Sir William's hand and pressed it gently; it was a silent promise, and Sir William

accepted it as such. Both were much moved, and little more was said till Roger spoke: "It is growin' late and the air is damp; hadna you better gang within, sir?"

Sir William arose and moved towards the castle, but Roger did not follow. He remained under the star-bestudded heavens, thanking Him who rules them for his new-found joys and unlooked-for blessings. For a while he sat absorbed in his thoughts, till a gentle hand was laid on his shoulder and Marjorie stood at his side.

"Weel, Roger, I didna ken but you had rin awa' an' left me my lane," she began.

"Noo, Marjorie, you ken weel enough that I wadna do sic a thing."

"Ay, I ken it. I was but fooling. But why are you sae lang by yoursel'?"

"Maister was wi' me till a bit sin'."

"Maister has been in his bed this hour past. Noo, tell me what troubles you sae that you are oot alane like an evil spirit. You maunna seem sae uncanny."

"Weel, stop a bit for breath, and I wull tell you something that wull please you weel. The maister sat wi' me an' tauld me some vera pleasant things. He told me he is vera glad that we are here, an' that I maun bide wi' him an' be as a son to him."

"You dinna tell me sae! Weel, if I amna a proud an' happy lass you canna find ane."

"An' I am happy tae, but I dinna ken that I am proud; I am thankfu', though, an' I ken my ain heart."

"Ay, thankfu'; that is the richt feeling to hae."

Roger took up his book, and the two walked into the castle feeling that they had a right there.

Within the castle the mode of living had undergone a change. Sir William was striving to live within his income, and he no longer attempted to keep up the old magnificence. Most of the larger apartments were shut up, that the family might not miss the familiar furniture, and a pleasant room with windows facing the south was chosen as the general sitting-room. Roger and Marjorie were never excluded, and even Elspeth found her way here during the long winter evenings, nor was the circle complete without her. Her stories were always in good demand, and when the younger members of the family were weary of their books they would frequently lay them aside and ask for a story.

One evening in midwinter all was desolate without the castle and the snow and sleet beat heavily against the windows; the wind howled

in the bare old trees and whistled around many an angle in the ancient building, moaned in the chimney, and shook the very doors. No one seemed disposed to talk, till Sir William spoke, saying, "I like not the nicht. True, we hae licht an' warmth within, but withoot it is fearsome. The wind has an uncanny sound. Elspeth, hae you nae a story to help while awa' a dreary evening?"

The old servant, pleased at such a request from the "maister himsel'," smiled and replied, "You maun let me think a bit, maister."

She had been knitting, but she dropped her work in her lap and leaning forward placed her hand over her eyes, lest anything she should see should distract her thoughts. After a few moments she sat erect, took up her knitting again, and began:

"Ane nicht like this, when I was but a young lass living mony a mile awa', I sat wi' my mither by her puir auld hearth. Thank God, there was a gude fire on it, yet we shivered a bit, for the wind raved that hard that it sent the shivers owre us. Beside, we had taken but a light supper, for the meal pock was far frae fu'. I felt like sleepin', I mind; but I think that mither liked to keep me awake. She was lanely an' sad as weel, for faither had been but a month dead. Weel, as

she was sayin', 'Keep awake for mither, hinny, that is a dear gude lass,' there came a gentle tap at the dure. Mither turned pale and didna at ance rise to see wha rapped. An' I said, 'Mither, some ane is at the dure. Why dinna you rise an' gang to it?'

" 'Whist, bairn,' she said. 'Wha kens but it is some ane wha wad wark us ill?'

" 'Then fear came to me tae, an' we sat still for a bit, till the gentlest, maist winsome voice that I iver heard sounded just aboon the storm, 'Hae you nae a bit warmth to gie a puir, weary woman?'

" 'Mither wailed oot, 'Eh, it is ane o' my ain sex oot i' sic a storm! God forbid that I should deny her the best the cot affords.'

" 'She rose quickly and unbarred the dure, an' sic a sight as stood upon the threshold i' the deep snaw! Ane glance was a' ane needed to ken that oor visitor was a beautiful leddy, an' close to her breast she held a wee bairn. The woman had lang, dark ringlets, but the snaw had sifted into them till they were amaist white, an' mither aye said that the tears were frozen fast to her eyelids. Her mantle was rich an' heavy an' her gown was beautiful. This I saw before she had taken her seat on the settle by the fireside. Weel, mither stood amaist speechless wi' amazement,

an' the tears glistened i' her e'en. But she soon stirred the fire an' made hot brose; it didna matter then that the meal was low. The puir ledly couldna eat onything; she was clean beat oot. As soon as she was warm enough, mither put her i' her ain bed an' then put the wee bairn by her. I mind that mither leuked sae sad as she held the bairn; it wasna a look o' reproach, but it was a look a bit distrustfu'.

"Then spake the ledly an' said, 'The bairn isna a child o' shame, gude woman. When I feel stronger I wull tell you mair. I canna noo.' An' the lids closed sae wearily on the bonnie blue e'en, never mair to open till the trump o' God shall wake the dead. The bairn, tae, had taken its daith cauld, an' the wee thing died i' twa days. Weel, it a' was a mystery. The neebors were called in an' naething could be dune but to gi'e the dead burial. This they were preparing to do, an' the matter was noised abroad, for it was sae strange, you ken. Folk came frae the toon to see the dead bodies, an' ane man came wha cried oot, 'It is Leddy Isabella Walker, as sure as I am a sinner!' An' this last was true, for he spake mony a wicked ward richt there i' the presence o' the dead. Weel, frae that the haill story came oot. The puir ledly had a warthless, brutish husband, an' he was that bad

to his wife that she stood i' mortal fear o' him. Sae she left hame withoot his kenning it, an' bargained wi' the carrier to bring her on her way to the toon, sae to gang hame by the stage-coach to her faither. But it came to pass that the carrier's faithfu' beast gave oot about three miles frae oor cot, an' the leddy could do naething but struggle on through the snaw till she came to some dwelling, an' they are fu' far apart upon that road till this day. Weel, grief, fear, weariness, an' cauld had dune their wark by the time she reached oor cot, an' the sweet leddy had to yield to them.

"Weel, ward was brought to her auld faither an' he came to oor hoose, an' sic grief as he made may it niver again be my lot to behold. I mind that he said, 'I feared that the lass wadna be happy. Curse the siller that led me to fa' in wi' the plan o' the merrige.'"

Lady Marion said, "You hae given us a sad story the nicht, Elspeth, ane that I hae never heard afore."

"Nae, I haena tauld it to you afore, but I had a mind to tell it ance."

Marjorie was disappointed, and she said, "I wanted a ghaist story, Elspeth."

"Weel, I wull try to think of ane, but you ken that I dinna believe i' them."

Sir William was silent, but when Marion came to bid him good night, he said, "My dear daughter, I never was sae glad i' a' my life as I am the nicht that you gave the answer that you did concerning your proposed merrige. Wha kens but you micht even noo hae been like Lady Isabel, and I like her grief-stricken faither!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEADLESS GHOST.

THE ghost story was not long in coming, for the morning found the inmates of the castle hemmed in by snowdrifts, and they had to devise many pastimes to divert their attention from the gloom without. As far as the eye could reach was a broad expanse of purest white, but the snow was far from being of the same depth. In some places the stubble was barely covered; in others it was piled high like miniature mountains. The weather was intensely cold, and nothing remained to be done but to pile high the fuel on the fire and appreciate the genial warmth and glow. Sir William grew weary of the outer view long before nightfall, and he was glad when the lights were brought in, the curtains lowered, and the family again gathered in the pleasant sitting-room. The evening was nearly half spent before Elspeth came in. With the carefulness of a good housewife she had attended to everything that could be damaged by the frost. Just as she entered Marjorie was saying, "I'm thinkin' that we wull get nae ghaist story the nicht."

"I am thinkin' sae tae, if I am to tell it," said Elspeth.

"Noo, Elspeth, gude Elspeth!" pleaded Marjorie as she took a stool and sat down by her.

"What for are you sae set for ghaist stories? I'se warrant that you hae seen as mony ghaists as ony ither body."

"I hae never seen ane i' my life."

"I believe you; nae mair has ony livin' mortal."

"Weel, I am disappointed, for I was sure that you wad gi'e us sic a story to-nicht."

"Weel, hinny, an' I do, likely you wull pu' the coverlids o'er your heid the nicht."

"Nae, I wunna, unless my heid gets cauld," laughed Marjorie.

"Gi'e her ane, Elspeth. Gi'e her ane o' your granny's stories, an' I trow she wull hae her fill," said Sir William.

"She wad hae her fill an' I could tell them 'as granny tauld them. I mind that she wad mak' me sae feared that I wad hardly dare go to sleep. Weel, let me see; I think I wull tell the story o' the Heidless Ghaist."

"Gude, Elspeth; I kenned you wadna disappoint me," said Marjorie approvingly.

"Awa' on the ither side o' the Grampian Hills, an' weel on to Inverness, lived a wicked

an' rich auld laird wha had niver a daughter but ane, an' she was as bonnie as a lass could weel be, folk said. 'This lass loved a farmer laddie. He, tae, was gude leukin', an' he had the manners o' a gentleman. His faither was weel enough to do i' the warld, but he wasna sprung frae an ancient family an' he wasna rich, you ken. Sae the laird wadna hear onything o' the youth, an' he forbade him to come near his hoose or to speak wi' his daughter. But the young folk wadna gi'e each ither up, an' they had a trysting-place i' a wood. Weel, somehow this came to the laird's ears. Ane nicht young Jamie went to the tryst, an' soon after he heard footsteps, an' he thought that it was his sweetheart. Sae he said, 'Hae you come sae soon, my dear love? You haena kept me waiting the nicht.' He hadna mair than spoken when the old laird sprang forward an' plunged a dirk up to the hilt i' the breast o' the youth. Jamie fell utterin' these words: 'God hae mercy on my soul, an' grant that this my slayer may niver hae an hour's peace as lang as he bides in this warld.'

"Granny aye said, when she came to those wards o' Jamie, that she was sae glad that he didna add, 'nor i' the ither warld either.' Weel, the bluid flowed sae fast frae the wound that life wad hae soon gone oot; but the laird didna ken

that. He pit his feet upon Jamie's body to haud him doon, an' he struck off his heid wi' his sword. When this was done he went hame to get a spade, for he kenned weel that it wadna do to leave the body unburied. When he went back wi' the spade an auld servant saw him an' marvelled muckle, and he took it in his heid to follow at a little distance. Weel, afore the auld laird got back to the dead body his daughter had found it. The moonlicht shawed her wha it was, an' her fears told her wha had done the foul deed. She took the bluidy dirk an' plunged it in her ain body, an' then laid hersel' doon by Jamie. She took ane o' his han's i' hers, an' as her faither came up he heard her say, 'He shallna part us, Jamie; if I canna live wi' you, I wull die wi' you. God forgive faither for this great sin, an' forgive me also if I hae sinned in what I hae done. I trow that grief has pit me beside mysel'.'

"She said nae mair, but the laird fainted an' fell flat upon his face in the saft mire. Weel was it for him that his servant had followed him, or he wad niver hae risen to his feet again. When the laird came to himsel' he said, 'Donald, mon, you maunna tell it. Griselda maun hae done a' this, but the puir lass is dead noo. We wull gi'e oot that some ruffian has murdered my daughter, an' the mon you maun bury here.'

“ ‘Oh, wae is me,’ said Donald, ‘that I maun gi’e Jamie Geddes sic a burial, puir lad!’

“ ‘Do as I hae bidden you and dinna mention aught o’ what you hae seen to-nicht. An’ gin farmer Geddes speirs at you about Jamie, you maun lee. I hae nae doot but you hae leed mony a time an’ na choked upon it either. Stan’ by me noo an’ you wullna be the loser, I pledge you.’

“ ‘I wullna be the gainer in the lang rin an’ I tell a lee. Curse the curiosity that led me to follow you!’ groaned puir auld Donald.

“ ‘Weel, you hae followed, an’ you maun hear till me.’

“ ‘The auld mon took up his spade an’ wi’ trembling han’s began his wark, saying, ‘It is hard that ane maun do as he is bidden when he canna tell that he is bidden to do richt.’

“ ‘Wark on, an’ none o’ your jabberin’, or yoursel’ an’ the auld dame will be turned oot o’ dures.’

“ ‘Donald made an end o’ his dreadfu’ wark, an’ then the twa carried the puir dead damsel hame to her mither, an’ the mither straightway went clean daft. After that nicht she niver kenned mair than the simplest fule that iver was born. Farmer Geddes mistrusted that the laird had murdered his son, but he couldna get haud o’ the laird wi’ a’ his money; sae he was saved

frae the han's o' the law, but na frae unhappiness. The story goes that niver a bit o' peace the laird had afterwards. Wheniver he shut his e'en i' the daytime he could see the dead bodies, an' i' the dark he aye saw them han' i' han'. Sometimes when he slept they would ca' him awake an' stan' before him; niver were they separated, an' the lad was aye wantin' his heid, an' the lassie's goon was aye stained wi' her ain heart's bluid. She wad aye point at her faither with her forefinger, an' she niver took her mournfu' e'en frae him. The auld mon just writhed under it a'; he couldna eat, he couldna sleep; the vera winds seemed to sigh into his ears, 'Thou art a murderer.' The sunshine mocked him, an' it was said that he wad oft fa' a-tearin' o' his ain flesh. As may be expected, he soon wore oot an' the grave claimed him. Some said that the twa ghaists wad sit upon his grave the haill nicht an' gang awa' when day was breakin'.

"After the laird was dead his puir auld wife was taken awa' frae hame and naebody wad live i' that ill-fated hoose. Auld Rab the fiddler wad tell lang stories aboot the sights he saw there, an' granny wad believe them; but she might hae kenned that Rab was never sober enough when he went hame nights to tell a ghaist frae a white coo."

"Hoo muckle o' that is true?" asked Marjorie, as Elspeth concluded.

"A' is true except the part aboot the ghaists. That was owin' to the disturbed state o' the auld laird's mind. Then, you ken, there are plenty o' simple-minded folk wha wull let their fears wark upon them till they baith see an' hear the vera things they fear."

"That is sae," assented Sir William; "an' though I dinna believe i' sic things, I maun say that sic-like torment is nane tae bad for a murderer."

"Nane tae bad," repeated Elspeth. "Think o' a mon puttin' a lad oot o' the way because, forsooth, he loved his daughter. Folk said, tae, that the lassie's mither had encouraged her, and said that wealth an' position didna always bring happiness."

Had Elspeth chosen her stories to harrow up her master's feelings, she could scarcely have taken a different course. Sir William gave her the credit of not intentionally disturbing him, and only said within himself, "Elspeth's stories set me thinkin' o' unpleasant things."

Marion, too, found much in the story to remind her that *her* father had come between her and him whom she loved, and she sat quietly while the others talked.

Roger remarked, "I wad like naething better than to gang through sic an auld empty hoose. I wad like to see the deserted leuk that it wad wear; I wad like to tread up an' doon the empty halls an' hear them sound; I wad like to gang through ilka room an' imagine what happened there. I think I could ca' up as mony merry lads an' lasses, stern dames an' dignified granddames, an' as mony men, baith gude an' bad, as iver lived in an ancient hoose. I wish that I could call them up right story-like and put them in a book."

"Wad you then be a writer o' buiks, Roger?" queried Sir William.

"Ay, sir, I wad an' I could."

"An' is that what you are aye thinkin' o' by yoursel', that you dinna talk mair?" asked Marjorie.

"Hoot, lassie! I dinna think muckle o' consequence," he replied.

"I dinna ken aboot that," persisted Marjorie.

Lady Marion gave a quick glance towards Roger. She wondered if she had the clew to his thoughtfulness. She smiled, but said nothing, while Marjorie asked, "Wad you put onything aboot ghaists i' your buik?"

"Nae, Marjorie, this life is full enough o' incidents, an' they are strange enough, forbye. What for should we seek to gang into the mys-

teries o' the ither life? I wish that you wad hae done wi' that likin' for ghaist-stories; nae gude wull come frae it; an' hasna Elspeth hersel' tauld you that there is nae truth i' sic things?"

"Ay, I ken it. But hoo near to the truth wad you come wi' your imaginin' hoo people hae lived?"

"I wad get nearer the truth than if I set oot to tell what I knew to be a lie. I haena lived amaist a score o' years for naething. I ken something o' the ways o' folk an' o' the warkings o' the human heart."

"Maist lads wadna care muckle aboot sic things at your age, Roger; but I can weel believe that you do," said Lady Marion.

Roger was pleased with this remark, coming from Lady Marion, but he made no answer.

"Hoo is it, Roger?" said Sir William; "has the bit o' praise we hae given silenced you? Gang on an' let us hear mair aboot your plans."

"I hae nae plans; I hae some fancies, idle fancies, nae doot; but that is a', sir."

He seemed to have no mind to talk more about himself. He arose and stirred the fire and put on the heavy logs of wood that were to burn till morning. This being done, the inmates of the castle retired to rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

AINSLIE'S RETURN.

THE winter had gone and the early spring was awakening new life in all the woods and fields. The laborers employed on the many acres of Felix Cameron were bestirring themselves, but their old master was even harder to please than usual. Evidently he was brooding over some disappointment, and his servants were at a loss to know how to please him.

At the close of a pleasant day when Felix had been unusually sullen a stranger came to his door. Now Felix was very fond of company, and upon this occasion he exerted himself to be agreeable. The stranger asked many questions, mostly about Craggsby Castle and its inmates. This was unfortunate, for the old man's ill-humor was caused by Sir William's refusal to part with some of his property. So Felix said, "The truth is, stranger, I am in nae frame o' mind to talk o' Craggsby Castle or the maister o' it either; I am vexed-like. You dinna ken it, but I hae bought mony a thing o' him just to be accommodatin', and noo he has some fine cattle that I hae set my heart

on; but he wunna sell them, sae that Ainslie lad says."

"Ainslie lad, did you say?"

"Ay, Roger Ainslie they ca' him. He an' his sister hae been at the castle for three years past. But what ails you, mon? You leuk excited-like."

"I am excited. I think I wull awa' to the castle at ance. I hae friends by the name o' Ainslie, an' I wad ken if the lad an' lass are ony kin to me."

"Oh, stop the nicht, stop the nicht. The morrow wull be time enough to gang."

"Nae, thank you. I think I maun gang noo."

"Weel, tak' your ain way, o' course. Good nicht to you."

A half-hour later the stranger stood at the gate before the castle. Roger was near by in his favorite seat, and he rose to admit him. Daylight was over, but the young moon was kindling a light by which the uncle and the nephew recognized each other.

"You ken me, my laddie, do you na?"

"You are either Uncle Roger or his ghaist."

"I am nae ghaist," replied the uncle as the two men embraced each other.

"Come up to the castle," said Roger.

"Nae," replied Ainslie, "sit doon wi' me here

a bit. I dinna ken as I wull be welcome at the castle."

"Nae welcome at the castle!" repeated Roger with some surprise. "I am sure that you wull be welcome; but gin you hae sic a fear I wull rin up an' fetch the maister himsel'."

"If a'budy thinks that I am dead, hae a care an' nae— Stop a bit; is Lady Marion married?"

"Nae, she isna. Did you ken Lady Marion?"

"Ay, I kenned her weel, an' I was just going to say, dinna tell her the news too suddenly."

"I wunna."

When Roger reached Sir William his face was all aglow with excitement.

"What is it, lad?" asked the old man.

"There is a mon at the gate wha says that he isna sure o' a welcome; an' he wunna come in till you come doon an' bid him welcome."

"Do you ken wha it is?"

"I do that, an' richt weel too."

"Weel, tell me wha I am to see."

"I wad liefer tell you ootside."

When they were out of Lady Marion's hearing Roger said, "Maybe you wunna believe me, but you will see Uncle Roger at the gate."

Sir William grasped the boy's arm and said, "You tell a lee for ance, lad."

"Weel, come an' see for yoursel'."

The old man did not slacken his hold on Roger's arm, for he needed the support. "Weel, I am glad that he isna dead," he said. Trembling with excitement he bade Mr. Ainslie welcome, adding, "Let the past be forgotten, and let this fine lad wham we baith love mak' us freends. But hoo came it that you werena drowned?"

"We were shipwrecked an' lost a' on board, an' I was glad to escape wi' my life. Life has been weary ever since; an' when I came back to Scotland I could get nae news o' Dalziel or the bairns. It is only by a seeming accident that I hae noo found them, though nae doot the Lord has guided me when I knew it not."

"Maist likely, maist likely," said Sir William in a husky voice.

They were now within the castle. Mr. Ainslie was not taken to the family sitting-room, but thither the father repaired to inform Marion as best he could.

"My daughter, can you bear some vera strange news?"

"I think sae, faither. What can it be?"

"Weel, he that we thought deed is alive an' under oor ain roof."

"Wha, faither? Not Ainslie!"

"Ay, it is Ainslie, safe an' sound."

Marion fainted and Elspeth was called to

attend her. Sir William looked on, thinking that his daughter must have loved deeply, and he resolved that if Mr. Ainslie should renew his attentions he would withdraw his objections.

Marjorie was overjoyed to see her uncle. She could not talk fast enough to him, and among other things she told "Leddy Marion fainted clean awa' when she kenned that you were here." But not till long after did Marion know that Marjorie's nimble tongue had told what she hoped to keep a secret.

The meeting between Marion and Ainslie was a private one, but Marjorie was convinced that they must have had a pleasant time. She said to her uncle, "I didna ken that you were acquainted wi' Leddy Marion, but I am sure o' ane thing."

"What is that, Marjorie?" asked her uncle.

"That you maun love her. A'boddy that kens her loves her, young an' auld, rich an' puir. She is a friend to ilka ane, an' ilka ane is a friend to her."

"Weel, Marjorie, you hae made a broad assertion, but I think you are richt," her uncle replied.

Ainslie was urged to remain for some time at the castle, for all saw that he needed rest and recreation. The worriment caused by the disap-

pearance of his brother's children and the other troubles that he had seen had added full ten years to his life. But after he found the children in such excellent health and spirits he concluded that the reckless experiment of Dalziel had worked no harm to them; and, judging from the many words spoken in their praise, he naturally thought that Sir William had suffered no loss through them. If he had any doubts that they were welcome they vanished when he talked of removing them. Sir William and his daughter were not long in making themselves understood. Old Elspeth was loud in her protestations against the plan, while Stephen made little less ado.

Both of the old servants, fearing that they would lose the young Ainslies, tried to convince the uncle that Roger and Marjorie ought not to leave the castle. It was not known to them that arrangements had been made to leave them for the present, at least.

Mr. Ainslie was crossing a field on his way back from a walk. Old Stephen was in the field ploughing. He sat down on the beam of the plough to rest and commenced to talk to Mr. Ainslie.

"You see yoursel' hoo I gi'e oot. My strength is but sma'; time has been when nae wark wad fash or fright me. Though I say it mysel', there

wasna a mon i' a' the country roun' that could gi'e better satisfaction at the plough. But auld age is upon me, an' there is need for a young an' a strang mon to step i' my place. Roger is gude at wark noo, an' sic a manager as he wull be! I maun say that I am surprised at him; he is far frae ordinar. The maister has taken a wonderful fancy to him forbye. I maun confess that I was a bit jealous o' him ance; but I thought better o' it, an' I said to mysel', 'Stephen Watson, you are an auld fule wi' your hot haste to wax wroth. Canna you see that the auld maun be set aside an' the young maun take their places?' Weel, that was near twelve months sin'; noo no ane can think mair o' the lad than I do mysel'. An' he is weel pleased here tae; speir at him an' see if he isna. Be persuaded noo by ane it may be has nae richt to speak, but ane wha has the gude o' his freends at heart an' an awfu' care for the weelfare an' honor o' Craggsby Castle, ane wha wull soon be gathered to his faithers an' be beyond all earthly moil an' care."

Stephen paused to wipe the perspiration from his brow, and then added, "Let me hae a promise that you wunna strip us o' oor strength an' take awa' oor main dependence."

"I think I maun promise, Stephen; but what am I to do, a lonely mon?"

"Ye maun marry like ither folk," he replied, his face breaking into a smile.

"Some things are easier said than done, Stephen."

"Ay, some things are; but I hae a notion, an' I amna alane in it, that you could wed withoot goin' a thousand miles frae here."

Old Stephen went on with his ploughing, and Ainslie walked back to the castle only to fall in with Elspeth, who at once said, "Mr. Ainslie, I maun speak oot. I feel amaist like her we read o' i' the Holy Scripture, her wha said to the mon o' God, 'Did I desire a son?' Sae I say noo, did ony o' us desire that these pleasant young people should be sent here till oor affections should be entwined around them an' then hae them taken awa'? Marjorie is sic a cheerfu', winsome lass that I love her next to my ain leddy hersel'. The castle has seemed like a different place sin' the bairns came here. Roger, wi' his calm, self-reliant air, an' Marjorie wi' her sweet ways an' her wee pleasant-ries, hae been the life o' us a'. Surely you wunna consign us to gloom a'thegither." Then with some embarrassment she went on, "I thought for sure that you yoursel' wad find some attraction here, Mr. Ainslie. I amna sae auld that I hae lost my memory. I haena forgotten what you ance bade me tell Leddy Marion."

"Then it was different, Elspeth. I had no ane but mysel' to look after. Noo I hae these bairns o' my brither, wha i' the providence o' God maun be considered as my ain."

"Hoot, mon! hasna the providence o' God found a hame for them? I tell you, the haill three o' you belong to Craggsby Castle as sure as my name is Elspeth Lundie." Then, shaking her head in a knowing manner, she continued, "The maister wunna hae aught against it noo. He has mair than ance said that he is glad o' the answer my leddy gave yon Dalziel. You think I dinna ken, but I do. We hae been i' straits an' we hae passed through lanely years, an' auld Elspeth has mair than ance been taken into confidence."

"Beware, Elspeth, that you dinna bid me hope for too much; you ken that I hae been a sad, weary mon a' these years."

"Ay, I ken that, an' I dinna bid you hope for tae muckle." Then catching a mischievous look in his eye, she said, "Awa' wi' you! You are but makin' game o' me. I trow that you hae the bargain fast made afore noo."

Ainslie laughed, and Elspeth joined him in spite of herself, for she had half a mind to be offended that anything so important should have escaped her notice.

But so it was. Quietly, very quietly, had all been arranged, and the old longing in Marion's heart was met. She had indeed clasped that "warm, friendly, loving hand again." And Ainslie, the tempest-tossed yet trusting Christian, found himself surrounded by friends and relatives, and he praised the goodness of God who "setteth the solitary in families."

CHAPTER IX.

GENTLE ANNIE.

WHILE our friends at the castle had been struggling with the troubles growing out of a narrow income Dalziel was away in London revelling in wealth and luxury. He felt that no one depended upon him or would call him to account, nor did he remember his allegiance to God. He found an ill-judged pleasure in this unbridled liberty. No qualms of conscience troubled his obdurate heart, no thought of the hereafter crossed his mind, and the happiness of others was nothing to him. To follow him we must paint many a scene of crime and shame from which the mind of the pure would revolt. But one story, perhaps the saddest of all, we will relate.

Far on the outskirts of the busy, throbbing metropolis of England lived Elizabeth Morris and her granddaughter Annie. She was a sweet, pleasant girl, and she was called among the neighbors "Gentle Annie." Both were women of good repute and all around them were pleased to show them many little acts of kindness. Annie, although young, had won the heart of a worthy

mechanic, Thomas Barton by name. The grandmother looked upon the youth as her future grandson, and a great load was taken from her mind when she thought that Annie would not be left alone and unprotected when she died. She had always been a woman of thrift, and the little cottage was the scene of comfort and contentment.

But into this peaceful, secluded home came one whose presence was a blight upon its happiness. Malcolm Dalziel, led by some spirit of evil, found his way there. In vain did the gray-haired woman warn her unsuspecting grandchild. Gentle Annie thought of nothing but the soft, smooth words and the dark, flashing eyes of the stranger. Poor Tom Barton also felt Annie's danger. Dalziel knew this and enjoyed the worriment that his visits at the cottage caused him.

A private marriage soon took place, and the girl felt secure and happy. She explained to her anxious grandmother that all her fears were groundless. She could not, she argued, lose such a superior chance. She felt sorry for Tom Barton; but kind as he was, she considered her conduct perfectly justifiable. She had read many stories of lowly maidens who married above their stations, and these stories had taken possession of her mind. She was intoxicated with the glittering gold she saw and with the fair promises of all she

was to become. "I shall make something of you, my sweet Annie; you will be astonished at yourself," he would say.

But the dullest of minds can anticipate in what way his words became true. It is easy to believe that he made her a heart-broken woman, and she was astonished at her own blindness and wilfulness. Dalziel never took her from the cottage, and before many months were passed he left her, never to return. In another half-year she gave birth to a son.

Long she looked for Dalziel, hoping against hope. At last she gave him up and asked for no sympathy, for she felt that she did not deserve it. She labored early and late that her grandmother's property might be exempt from drafts to support the child. She would not give him a name, but called him "Baby" when she spoke of him. Three more years of grief and toil ended her life. In her last days her grandmother asked, "Annie dear, will you not name your child?"

"Call him Thomas," she answered; then she burst into tears. Recovering her voice she said, "Alas, grandmother, that one can do in so short a time what a whole lifetime cannot undo! But then for me it will not matter long. It seems hard that the one mistake of my life should kill me; but it is just, or a just God would not suffer

it to be. When I am gone tell Thomas that I knew at last that all was wrong. He will forgive me then, for no earthly tie shall bind me. After death we shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but we shall be as the angels of heaven, our dear Lord hath said. To him shall I belong who bought me with his blood. I will not deny that I find some pleasure in the thought that I shall be loosed from the unhappy bond that holds me, even though death must be the liberator. Ask Thomas if he will have a little care over his namesake for the sake of what we were to each other in our early years. I am sure that he will. He was aye truer to me than I was to him. Well, I cannot recall the past, but I wish that my mistake might be written in a book as a warning to all giddy maids that they weigh well their thoughts before they change into deeds. If he whom I will not name returns, tell him I left but one message for him. Tell him to make his peace with God. I hope that he will not know about the child, and I would rather that the child should not know about him. But I cannot arrange these things. I am weary of thinking, and all my thinking has come too late. Forgive me, dear, good grandmother, that I did not heed your advice."

"Ay, sweetheart, a thousand times I forgive you."

Both ceased speaking, and Annie soon fell asleep.

In a few days the grandmother saw by the uneasiness in Annie's movements that death was approaching. She picked at the coverlid and rolled her head, tossing her heavy ringlets about the pillow. Thomas Barton and his mother were called in, but Annie did not know them; she stared at them with a vacant look in her blue eyes.

"I cannot abide it," said Thomas, and he left the house.

"Yet I must abide it, even if I am left all alone," said the afflicted grandmother.

"I will not leave you, and, believe me, Thomas is not far away," answered Mrs. Barton.

The odor of sweet-scented herbs came in through the window that summer morning. Annie caught their perfume, and in her confused state of mind she fancied that it was borne in upon her senses from the other world.

"It surely must be a land of delight," she murmured, "for already I catch odors sweeter than thyme or southernwood or any flower that grew in our garden. The way is so plain and the ascent so easy! Annie, poor Annie, you will have peace again, and all through the infinite compassion of the Lord Jesus!"

She said no more. The graceful head lay quietly upon the pillow, there was a slight quiver about the lips, and Annie had ceased to breathe.

"Her life has gone out," said Mrs. Barton. Then finding Thomas she said, "The struggle is over."

Tom Barton went a little way from the house, and sitting down by the brookside he wept bitterly for the early dead. Surely he forgave her now, if never before. Soon he took his way homeward with his mind somewhat calmer, but he was still sad over the blighted life of the only one he had ever loved. In the way before him stood a "coach and four." Evidently something was wrong; but he had no mind to meet any one, and was about turning away into the field when the familiar voice of one of his neighbors accosted him. "I say, Tom, come here and lend us a hand. These gentlemen have broken down and they need help."

Tom pulled his hat down over his eyes and walked up to the group. Jim detected his sadness and he asked, "How is she, Gentle Annie?"

"Cold in death!"

"Poor lass! I wonder where that cursed knave is?"

"He is somewhere in the service of the devil, I'll be bound. But I don't want to think of him.

It is well for him that he does not cross my path the morn. Give me a strong cord if you have it."

The other produced a string that would answer. Tom tied it through the incisions that he had made in the broken harness. The driver then pronounced it safe till they could reach the nearest village.

The coach moved away, but Jim and Tom stood talking when a pair of black eyes looked back at them through the window. Dalziel, for it was he, had started with some friends upon a tour of pleasure. He had been the life of the party till the accident took place, when he became very quiet.

"What is amiss with you, Dalziel; you are not like yourself?" asked one of the friends.

"Well, one hates to break down. Of course this amounted to nothing, but it might happen at some swift turn in the road and send us to our account in a hurry."

"Have you then such a bad account?"

"Aboot like your ain," answered Dalziel, using his native tongue, as he always did in his unguarded moments.

The whole party laughed, for they were ready to concede that there was very little difference between them. Still the spirit of revelry seemed

to be damped. As for Dalziel, he knew from the few words that he overheard that curses were being heaped upon him by the simple-minded folk that gathered in Elizabeth Morris' little cottage.

Quietly and sadly the neighbors gathered on the day of Annie's funeral. The morning was still and cool and everything whispered of peace, but it was a solemn peace. The reading was solemn, the prayer was solemn, but more solemn than either was the pale face of Gentle Annie lying in the sleep of death. The wrinkled face of Elizabeth Morris wore the calm that came from thinking of the greater sufferings of Gethsemane. The whole atmosphere seemed filled with the presence of the blessed Lord. It was as if he stood in their midst saying once more, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

And surely it was his peace that subdued Tom Barton as he looked on the confined clay of his early friend who should have been more than a friend to him. He turned away with a sigh that seemed to say, "It is all past now. I will leave it with Him who has suffered it to be so."

In the morning Thomas Barton called at the cottage, for he knew that Mrs. Morris had something to communicate. When he heard Annie's message his tears flowed freely. He took the

little Thomas on his knee and said, "I can love him, since he looks like his mother." He kissed the little red mouth that the child held up to him. Then he turned to the grandmother and said, "The child shall never want for a friend while I live."

CHAPTER X.

LADY MARION'S MARRIAGE.

MR. AINSLIE went away, settled his business affairs, and brought back no paltry sum with him. Then there began to be a great stir in the castle, for a wedding was approaching. Sir William was in excellent spirits and Marjorie's joy was unbounded. Roger smiled oftener and his smile lingered longer than usual. Lady Marion was very quiet, but it was easy to see that she was happy. Elspeth's time was divided between instructing the new servants and attending to her own duties. Occasionally she would find time for a short chat with some one, and when talking of the coming marriage always concluded by saying, "I hae thought many times that Mr. Ainslie would be back again."

One evening Elspeth went to Stephen's cottage to spend an hour. As may be supposed, the time was well improved. Not that Elspeth divulged anything that had been committed to her keeping, but general matters were talked over.

"I hear that Leddy Annie is to be here. Weel I remember the last time that she was at the

castle; it was not lang after oor led dy died," said Stephen.

"Ay, I ken," said Elspeth; "but there be things that arena for us to speak o' too familiarly." She was afraid that something might be said that would displease their employers, for all knew that Lady Annie left the castle because she and Sir William had some misunderstanding. So she added, "It wunna do for us to say a' that we know about."

"Ay, I ken that is sae, but do you think that I hae forgotten the leuk o' her as she softly smoothed wi' her lily-white hand Hannah's hair? She had the fever, you mind. When ane is good to Hannah, I mind that, you see."

"I 'se warrant you mind that," said Hannah, the slightest shade of pink coming into her sal-low cheeks. Then she added, "I mind her kindness mysel', an' I wull be right glad to see her again."

"We all wull be glad to see her; but Leddy Marion is the ane wha wull rejoice the most. I trow that she is wearying for a sight o' her mother's kin. Leddy Annie wull bring Edith Grant, her niece, with her. I declare, it wull seem fine to hae sic grand company again at the castle."

"Wha else are to be guests at the castle? I haena heard muckle about it," said Hannah.

"Oh, a haill chance o' folk frae the toon, squires an' lawyers an' doctors an' grand folk. But oor leddy wullna hae ony foolishness wi' sae mony gowns as some brides hae. She says the Campbell hoose isna what it ance was; an' wull you believe it, she doesna care muckle for the family jewels! I think she wad like to drop a' titles an' be called Marion Campbell."

"I think she wad rather be called Marion Ainslie," said old Stephen, smiling.

"Of course she wunna wear the name o' Campbell muckle langer."

"Noo," said Stephen, "I hae heard pleasant news the day. I heard that Ainslie has bought the horses back again, but neither Sir William nor Leddy Marion are to ken aboot it till the horses are brought to the vera dure. Sae you maunna say onything aboot it. I thought it wad gi'e you pleasure, sae I didna keep it frae you. It was Roger's thought, an' his uncle fell in with the plan at ance. Auld Felix had nae mind to part wi' the beasts; but his grandson, Graham Walker, persuaded the old mon to gi'e consent."

"Nae wonder that Graham spoke a gude ward for the Ainslies, for he has his eye on Marjorie. I hae to laugh to see the lass. She kens weel enough that he is fond o' her, but she never lets

him see that she kens it, an' he, puir lad, tak's muckle trouble to give her the understanin' o' it. I wad be right weel pleased gin they did mak' a match; for some ane will coax her frae us, an' this wadna be goin' far."

"I dinna ken, Elspeth. Felix is sic a crabbed auld soul that I dinna see hoo ony ane stands it under the same roof wi' him. It wad be a thousand pities to sour oor Marjorie's sunny temper. Hannah, here, thinks she is the maist winsome, light-hearted lass that she ever kenned."

"I hae thought aboot that mysel', but Marjorie and Graham are baith young. Dootless auld Felix wull be weel oot o' the way before the merriage wull tak' place. Let me see, Felix maun be fu' ten years upon borrowed time noo."

"Is that sae? I didna ken that he is sae auld, but I did ken that he is muckle aulder than he is gude," said Hannah.

"Weel, Hannah Watson, I am surprised to hear you say that muckle against ony ane," said Elspeth, rather enjoying Hannah's remark.

"Weel, there is nae gude in saying aught against ony ane. If folk are sae vera bad, we maunna foul oor tongues wi' talkin' o' them; an' if they arena bad, why should they be leed aboot? Besides, ither folks' business isna my business, an' why should I mak' it sae?"

"You are right there; it isna right for us to trouble oorsel's," assented Elspeth. "But my dear leddy's merriage seems to be my business. An' I am sae glad that a' is coming oot right, as far as human eye can see."

"Of course, Elspeth, we maun rejoice wi' those wha do rejoice, as well as weep wi' those wha weep."

Stephen cast an approving glance upon Hannah. He thought that all her words could not be said better. He often said within himself, "Stephen Watson, you are a lucky mon to hae sic a wise, quiet, wee wife."

"Weel, I maun be going. To-morrow we wull begin oor preparations for the merriage-feast, an' I maunna be late the morn. Hanuah, we wull need you the day after to-morrow. That is what I came to tell you, an' I amaist forgot it. Weel, my heid is that fu' that it is nae wonder that I forget some things. Gude nicht to you baith."

On the following morning Marion was looking from her window. She was reviewing the past, and she was so lost in her thoughts she did not notice that anything unusual was taking place until she heard the neighing of a horse. She immediately thought of Rory, and looking down she saw the gentle creature all saddled as if waiting

for some one. Graham Walker held his head, and one of Felix Cameron's farm-hands was leading the carriage-horses up the road.

It did not take Marion long to understand the situation. She donned her riding-habit and was soon in her accustomed seat on Rory's back. Another horse was saddled for Mr. Ainslie, and before long the pair rode away. Elspeth hung out of the window to watch them, and when she turned away, Marjorie cried, "Weel, Elspeth, I do declare, you hae tears i' your e'en."

"An' you wad hae tears i' your ain, gin you were as glad as I am."

Elspeth and the rest of the servants were very busy during the days that followed. Within this time the choicest of the flocks and herds were appropriated for the wedding festivities. Meantime Lady Annie arrived with her niece, Edith Grant. The large rooms, so long closed, were opened, renovated, and some were refurnished. It had been understood, when Sir William gave his consent to the marriage, that his daughter was never to leave him. So as the castle was to be Ainslie's home, he claimed the right to spend some money in supplying its needs.

Elspeth was very joyful at this time, for she was sure that prosperity was returning to the castle.

But how did the gentle Lady Marion bear all these changes? Already she seemed to be placed across those long weary years that had passed between the time of her answer to Dalziel and Ainslie's return. The old light had come back to her eyes, the pallor was gone. God had not forsaken her in her trouble; he had not left her without some degree of comfort in her years of darkness; and now with his approbation she had the pleasure of realizing the fulfilment of her earthly hopes. She still loved to work with Elspeth, but the old servant would not allow her to do so. She would answer, "Gang oot o' the kitchen, my leddy. Gang an' tak' a ride upon Rory; it wull do you gude."

Once she said to Lady Marion as she came in from a walk, "My dear leddy, you are getting your bloom a' back again, an' I am overjoyed to see it. I wunna speak o' the bitter past, but leuk what changes oor gude Faither can bring aboot. It seems to me that even the wee burnie maun ken the gladness that hangs aboot the auld place. Nature seems to wear a mair cheerfu' face, but I expect that it is oor ain joy that mak's us think sae. At ony rate, it is a new proof o' the gude-ness o' the Lord."

"Ay, Elspeth, surely we maun see the gude-ness o' the Lord in a' that is granted to us. We

maun continue to be faithfu' an' na forget to whom our thanks are due."

Lady Marion was delighted to see her cousin, Lady Annie. She talked a great deal to Marion about her mother, and she felt that she had lost much all the years that Lady Annie had absented herself from the castle.

When the wedding-day dawned it seemed that nature had been determined to grant a perfect day. "It is a gude omen, my leddy," said Elspeth. "I dinna believe muckle i' signs, but you ken they say, 'Happy is the bride that the sun shines on.'"

There was no lack of good-will among the guests and no lack of good cheer at the wedding-feast. It was a happy time, and perhaps no one was happier and better satisfied than Sir William, and his mental comment was, "Hoo we do miscalculate! We think that we see straight, while we are far frae seein' richt. Noo I ken weel that if I had had the management o' affairs, I wad hae spoiled a' the happiness o' this day."

CHAPTER XI.

OLD STEPHEN'S SORROW.

STEPHEN WATSON had scarcely ceased to rejoice over the happiness at the castle ere trouble came to his own little cottage. Hannah, on whom his hopes had centred for nearly fifty years, was smitten with an incurable malady. It was vain for Stephen to attempt to work, and he went to Sir William with this plea :

"Kind maister, you ken, I suppose, that the doctor has said that my Hannah maun dee. Wull you gi'e me leave to stay by her an' nurse her wi' my ain han's?"

"Ay, Stephen, surely you may stay by her, an' if you hae ony other request, you maunna be slow to speak."

"You are vera gude. The doctor says that if she could hae a wee drappy o' wine noo an' then, it might set her up a bit."

"I wull see that you hae the wine, Stephen; an' richt sorry I am that sae little can be done for the gudewife."

"An' she isna sae auld, either, maister; but saxty-sax come October. I loved her when she

was but a slip o' a girl, an' I merried her the morn that she was saxteen. You ken, as weel as I do, that she has always been ane o' the best o' women, always sae kind an' gentle, an sic a gude Christian tae. But you dinna ken what she has dune for me. When we were first merried she worried because we had nae prayer. Mony a time she said, 'Stephen, I dinna like to gi'e mysel' to sleep unless the voice o' prayer first goes up to the ears o' Him wha doesna slumber.' Weel, when I saw hoo the puir lass fretted because I didna ca' upon the name o' the Lord, I tried after the language o' prayer, but I found that I couldna mak' it sound richt. Then Hannah said to me, 'You maunna try sae hard. You maun love God your Faither as he has bidden you, then you wull speak to him as your heart prompts you, an' the heid wull hae little to do wi' it.' An' sae I found it to be; it is the heart that cries oot after God. The heid isna to be depended upon in matters o' religion. Weel, I maun awa' to Hannah noo, an' thank you for your kindness. I maun be wi' her while I may, you see.'

Stephen walked hurriedly towards his cottage. If we could follow him we would see him go right to his wife and kiss her pale cheek; we would have heard him ask, "Is the pain nae better, Hannah?"

"Nae better, Stephen; but I hae grace an' strength gi'en me to bear it."

"Oh, my puir wife, my ain kind dearie, hoo gladly wad I tak' the pain upon mysel' an' gi'e you rest."

"I ken that, Stephen, but you canna. Each must bear his or her ain allotment o' sufferin' an' sorrow. The dear Lord wull see to it that nane o' us hae tae muckle to bear. Remember that. Life is fu' o' trouble, but for each trouble there is a solace. The Healer's han' is outstretched towards every wound, an' surely we canna complain o' chastisement, Stephen. We hae had mony, vera mony years o' quiet joy together. They haena seemed mony, because we hae been sae happy. We hae grown auld, an' we haena thought aboot it; time has fled an' we wist it not. We hae needed but little, an' that little we hae aye had. Sir William has never been severe wi' us, an' o' late he has been mair than gude. A' the folk at the castle wull be gude to you, Stephen, when I'm awa'. Elspeth an' Marjorie, an' even Leddy Marion hersel' wi' a' her happiness, wullna forget to speak comfortin' wards to a lonely mon."

"That may be sae; but none o' them can speak wards that wull be like yours, Hannah."

"Maybe, Stephen, maybe; but think o' the

meetin' ayont a' earthly partings; wullna that be blessed?"

"Ay, that it wull; but hoo lang the time wull seem till then! You said a few minutes sin' that the years had seemed sae short to us together, but they wullna be short to me when I am alane. Ay, ay, they do seem short! Eh! it seems but a few years sin' I brought you to my hame, an' yet it is twascore an' ten years."

Stephen sat musing on the past, and Hannah fell asleep. Often he cast on her a glance of love and pity. Her face was very sweet with its look of repose, and Stephen said, "She aye had that dainty leuk around her mouth. A bonnie face she had, an' sic canty ways tae. Weel, a' is passing frae me. God gi'e me grace to stan' my grief."

Hannah still slept, and Stephen quietly made some preparations for his lonely meal. In those last days Hannah scarcely tasted food. In vain did Stephen say, "Try to tak' a bit o' food sae that you may gain strength, just a wee bit, dearie." But her appetite was gone, and the old man often pushed his own food back untasted.

When Hannah awoke Elspeth was sitting by her bedside.

"Hoo are you the day, Hannah?" she inquired.

"I amna sae weel, Elspeth. I trow that I am weel on wi' the seckness, an' the last maun soon come."

"Think you sae? Hoo do you feel in view o' approaching daith? A' is weel, I mak' nae doot."

"A' is weel an' a' is richt that oor Maker orders."

"That sounds like yoursel', Hannah. I thought that you wadna hae a murmuring spirit, though the pain o' the body an' the pain o' parting wi' the gudemon maun baith be hard to bear."

"It wad ill become me, Elspeth, to find fault wi' the arrangements o' Providence. Sic things might be overlooked in an unbeliever, but in a believer never. Sic a course wad gi'e the lee to oor profession, you ken."

"Sae it wad. There is mony a professing believer that doesna leuk at it i' that light, I'm thinking. Weel, it is gude to trust in the Lord at a' times, an' that withoot wavering; for as St. James says, 'He that wavereth is like a wave o' the sea, driven by the wind an' tossed.' I dinna want to be tossed aboot. I like to feel that beneath me an' aroun' me are the iverlasting arms."

"Ay, Elspeth, I ken the blessedness o' sic a

trust. I dinna fear daith ony mair than I fear to fa' asleep wi' Stephen keepin' watch over me. Of course it seems strange to think o' daith sae near, but fear I hae none."

Other words were spoken and other thoughts pertaining to life and death were exchanged, and when Elspeth went her way each woman felt that she was stronger through the interview.

It was sad to see Stephen's weary, dispirited look. It said as plainly as words, "I canna bear it." At last the end came, so quietly that Stephen did not notice the approach of Death until his work was done. He spoke of it thus: "She was sleepin', an' she just slept on, sae far as I could see. There was neither movement nor sound. The first I kenned she had the death pal-lor an' her breast had ceased to heave."

After his wife's death Stephen became very disconsolate. He still lived in the little cottage, the dog being the only sharer of his home. Hannah's clothing was not removed from the pegs where she had hung it. Everything remained as she had left it. Stephen would touch nothing lest he should displace it.

As Hannah had predicted, all the inmates of the castle were very kind to Stephen, but he pined for the one who would return no more. Gradually he lost his health and his spirits. He

moved about so slowly that Sir William saw how unable he was to work, and he managed to have him furnished with some light employment. But even such slight labor soon became too much for his failing strength, and he told Sir William, by way of explanation, "I think that I can do a bit, an' when I try after it I find my strength gane."

Sir William replied, "Weel, my mon, you needna wark ony mair; you hae done enough for a lifetime, an' I judge that the estate isna sae badly crippled that it canna gi'e you your living frae this oot. Neither need you lodge there i' your cot alane. You haena been an ordinary servant to me, Stephen. You hae had muckle care for my weelfare frae the first; noo I maun show that maisters can requite the faithfu'ness o' servants ance in a while at least."

"I canna find wards to express my gratitude to you, sir; but unless you need the cot for a new comer I wad like to end my days in it. As for support, I hae a gude bit laid by, mair than I shall need, unless I am seck for a lang time."

"I wunna take the cot frae you, Stephen, even if I hae to build a new ane. Keep it, mon, an' God comfort you for the loss that you hae had."

CHAPTER XII.

WEE JESSIE'S COVE.

MOST of Elspeth's stories were rehearsed during the long winter evenings, but she told one on a warm summer afternoon while she and Marjorie were sorting blueberries. Roger was somewhat indisposed, and he sat in the same room with them. His book lay in the deep window-seat, but for once he was not studying. He looked out upon the unruffled lake and the cool, green banks that shut it in. He might have been thinking of the story of the Black Linn, for he said, "I wonder if no story could be tauld aboot this bonnie lake? It leuks sae calm and still that ane wad-na suppose there could be anything sad connect-ed wi' it. Hae you ever heard one, Elspeth?"

Elspeth replied, "Ay, I hae heard mair than ane. There is ane that is warth the telling, an' it may be that the ithers arena true."

"Tell us the ane, for I dinna feel like keepin' at my books this afternoon."

"You keep tae steady at your buiks, an' it wullna hurt you to leave them alane for ance. Weel, let me see aboot the story. It was lang

ago, while this castle was in building, that the heid o' this house, the house o' Campbell, brought a family to this spot an' put them in an auld cottage that stood upon the north side o' the lake. The husband and faither was the heid mason, an' the mither an' her grown lass, Jeannie, made ready the meals for the warkmen. They had mair bairns, but I mind weel that there was a lass o' ten years an' a bit bairn, a lad. As may be supposed, the mither and the oldest lass were vera busy frae morn till night, and the wee lad was left i' the charge o' Jessie, the ten-year-old lass. The twa wad be oot alane for hours at a time. It was pleasant simmer weather, and the mither didna mind sae lang as they came in in time for their meals.

"Weel, ane morn they went oot as was their wont, but they didna come in at noon for their dinner, and the mither went oot and called, 'Jessie, Jessie!' Alack! nae Jessie answered, an' the mither's heart took fright at ance; but the faither said, 'Jessie is but plucking flowers or is busy wi' some pleasant employ, an' she has forgotten her dinner.' But when he had eaten his ain dinner an' the lass didna come, he grew a bit uneasy and shouted her name lang an' loud.

"At length Jeannie put her hand to her heart an' turned pale.

“ ‘What ails you, lass?’ asked her faither, frightened; an’ she answered through her white lips, ‘The lake, the lake! they may be in the lake!’

“ ‘Whist, lass, it is nae ways likely, an’ you maunna speak sic wards to your mither; she wad fear the warst at ance.’

“ ‘As he spoke he leuked towards the lake, an’ there stood the mither peerin’ doon into the water, an’ he called, ‘Come awa’, wife; the bairns arena likely to be where you are leukin’.’

“ ‘Wha can tell that?’ she answered, wringin’ her hands. But they could see naething in the water then. The haill afternoon wore awa’ an’ nicht set in. Then the puir mither wailed oot, ‘Maun the nicht come an’ my bairns arena found?’

“ ‘Weel, after a bit the moonlicht glinted forth an’ the search continued the nicht through. But not till ten o’clock the next morn did they find the bairns. They lay in the bit cove under twa or three feet o’ water. You ken the water is but shallow in that place. The puir lass had her wee brither tightly clasped in her arms, as if she had thought o’ him till the last. Her sweet blue e’en were open an’ the bonnie golden hair was tangled an’ fu’ o’ the grass an’ weeds. They maun hae been standin’ too near the edge an’ slipped in.’”

Elspeth paused to take breath, and Roger said, "I ance heard Stephen speak o' Wee Jessie's Cove; now I ken the reason."

"Ay, that was the way the cove was named," assented Elspeth.

"I thought that it was named for some pleasant wee maid wha loved to sit by the lake," said Roger.

"I would that it had been sae; then ane puir mither wadna hae died amaisht heart-broken an' early been laid to sleep by her dead bairns. Naebody could comfort her; she wad often say, 'Wae warth the day that we came to bide by yon cruel, deceitfu' water!' When folk tried to talk to her she wad answer, 'Gang your ways an' leave me to my sorrow.'

"'Tis said that when the minister tried to tell her it was her duty to cheer up she wad reply, 'I try to be submissive, but I trow that I can never be cheerfu' mair. It is easy to say cheer up, but you hae a' your bairns left. You dinna ken hoo empty my arms are.'

"But when her last days came she amended an' leuked at the dispensation o' Providence wi' clearer e'en. 'It is weel wi' the bairns,' she wad say, 'an', mair over, I shall soon gang to them. The Lord's hand was i' the matter, an' it maun hae been for gude. He aye kens better than we

do; an' the sooner we come to believe it the better for oor peace.'

"Noo, it isna muckle of a story you may think, but I never leuk at the cove withoot thinkin' o' the twa hapless anes wha perished there. Often too I think o' the puir mither's wards, 'God aye kens better than we do; an' the sooner we come to believe it the better for oor peace.'"

"Ay, Elspeth, I think I ken what it is to feel sae, for I too hae passed through bereavements and sorrow. Like her, I hope that I hae come to believe that God kens best."

"It is weel that you can say that muckle," answered Elspeth, "for I count nae ane's happiness safe till he can say that."

Marjorie had not spoken, but now she said, "I think that I hae been a deal happier sin' I learned that a wiser Ane than I controls a' things that concern me, an' that I needna tak' muckle anxious thought sin' God takes thought for me."

Marjorie said this with a simple and childlike faith, and neither Elspeth nor Roger doubted that she knew whereof she spoke. The old woman said, "Dear heart, I was aulder than you by far when I rightly learned sae blessed a lesson; but, thanks be to God, I learned it at last."

CHAPTER XIII.

ROGER LEAVES HOME.

MR. AINSLIE'S coming had changed Roger's prospects. The uncle felt that he could not put a portion of his money to a better use than to educate his nephew. He felt almost sorry that Roger had spent so many of his best years for study on the castle farm. He knew that Roger was no ordinary youth, though he could not divine what possibilities might be in him. He was aware that the lad had a highly imaginative disposition, and he was not particularly pleased that it was so. Each year Roger became more and more fond of his books, and as he had received very good advantages while his father was living, he was well prepared to enter a high-school at Edinburgh. Although delighted at the prospect of educational privileges, he could not turn away without a sigh for all that had grown so dear to him at the castle.

Marjorie, too, was very sad, for she had never before been separated from her brother; but the hope of seeing him as wise as he hoped to be reconciled her to the separation. She never forgot the few words that Roger had dropped about the

book he hoped to write, and she comforted herself by thinking of what he might become, and she bravely beat back her tears. She reasoned to herself, "If Roger is to become a great mon, he maun bestir himsel'. God doesna wark miracles for folk wha by patient continuance in a richt course can come to the desired end. We maun aye use a' that we hae within oursel's, whether it be little or muckle. I thought o' this the other day when I read aboot the widow's cruse o' oil. The prophet o' the Lord wad do naething for her until he kenned what she had i' her house; then he increased that she had. Sae I mak' nae doot we maun leuk within oursel's an' see how we can help oursel's. I dinna ken what there is in me—nae muckle o' onything, perhaps. Folk say, 'Marjorie is a light-hearted lass, an' gude company an' cheerfu'-like.' Weel, that isna vera bad; I dinna ken but I wad as lief cheer people as instruct them; there is mony a sad heart that needs comfortin'. I think I wad liefer comfort folk than do onything else. I haena seen sae muckle sorrow mysel', yet I hae been orphaned at an early age, an' if I had been o' a sad turn o' mind I might hae grieved aboot it till this day. But I trow that it wadna please the dear Lord, for he has tauld us that a' things wark together for gude to them wha love God. I am sure that

I dinna want to be amang those wha love him not. Though I say to mysel' amaist ilka day, 'Marjorie Ainslie, you are naught but a simple-minded lass,' I trow that I am a happy ane. One thing I canna mak' oot; that is, hoo some vera wise an' vera gude people hae sic a dread o' God. I hae had nae dread o' him sin' my faither died. When that great loss came to me I cried unto God, saying, 'Dear Heavenly Faither, I hae nae earthly faither noo. Wilt thou fill his place to me? Let me feel thee near me, guardin' an' guidin' me, an' dinna let me hae ony fear o' thee.'

"Weel, here I sit, as though I had naething to do, niver thinkin' that the fowls are hungry an' the wee birds are wantin' their crumbs."

She took her basket and went about her self-imposed task of feeding all of the feathered tribe about the castle. After she had fed the fowls she stopped to pat old Snap as he lay warming himself in the morning sun, for she thought that the poor old dog must miss Roger too.

She saw Stephen Watson wandering about in an aimless manner, for he was more lonely than usual since Roger had gone. While he felt glad that Roger had the chance to become a scholar, he also thought that it was a pity that "sic a smart, handy lad" should be taken from the farm. He smiled sadly as he saw Marjorie, and he said,

"Alack, alack, it is lanelier than iver withoot your brither."

"Ay, it is lanely, Stephen; but we maun mak' the best o' it. I had a mind to greet, mysel', but I didna. It is for his ain gude that he went, you ken."

"Ay, ay, Marjorie, you are i' the morn o' your life, an' a' leuks bright an' sunny to you. You can comfort yoursel' wi' the thought o' future usefulness an' happiness, but auld Stephen's day is past. He has had the morn, the midday, ay, an' the gloamin', an' a' that he has left is to sit i' the fast-fallin' shades o' night's darkness."

"There is mair than that for you, Stephen; there is the everlasting morn."

"Ay, ay, I dinna forget that. I wad be maist miserable an' I didna mind that. But sic things are spiritually discerned; an' you ken that we a' hae times when we think sae muckle o' vanished earthly joys that oor e'en are blinded aboot the joys to come. But, lassie, the gude Saviour kens that tae. He has felt lanely here, an' he wunna lay it to my charge that for whiles I forget to leuk awa' to heavenly things. He has compassion on us in oor blin'ness an' unbelief; for I mind that Paul writes to Timothy, 'For if we believe not, yet He abideth faithfu': He canna deny himsel'.' But you should see hoo gloomy the auld cot leuks

o' evenings an' Hannah awa'. By the wee round table there she aye sat busy wi' her wark, an' she aye had a sweet, sunny leuk upon her face. Naebody sits there noo. Your brither kenned hoo I miss her, an' he often came an' sat i' her place wi' his buik; noo he is gane, an' naebody wull drap in. I ken hoo it wull be: the lang winter nights wull come an' I wull sit alane. The fire wull burn low an' the candle wull burn oot; even the auld doggie wull stretch himsel' on the rug that Hannah made for him an' gi'e himsel' to sleep. But auld Stephen wunna sleep muckle; he wull think the haill nicht awa'."

"Weel, it is sad, Stephen, but you maunna dwell upon it. You maunna draw sae dark a picture. You arena i' sic a bad strait as the three Hebrew children were when in the fiery furnace, an' yet they werena left withoot a comforter. Sae God wullna leave you alane in your sorrow an' laneliness."

Marjorie passed on into the castle and old Stephen sauntered on in the mild autumn morning. He was musing on Marjorie's last reply, and he gathered strength from the thought that the more we need Christ the nearer he is to comfort us.

Although Marjorie's time was her own, it was not spent in idleness. She did not dislike the household duties that she had learned to perform

so well, and she often insisted on helping Elspeth with a portion of her accustomed work. "Just to keep my hand in, Elspeth," she argued once when the old servant objected to her helping in the kitchen.

"Ay, keep your hand in. Ane o' these days you wull need a' your skill doon in a big hoose I wot o'."

"Noo stop, Elspeth. It wull come gude for you that I keep handy. I help you a gude bit wi' your wark, an' a' I ask in return is a story ance in a while. An' I haena had ane in a dog's age."

"It maun be a very short-lived dog, ane that hasna had his e'en open. Hooever, I wull gi'e you ane, sin' you ask it. Mind me o' my promise this evening when I hae my knitting. I can tell a story best when I hear the click o' the needles."

That evening, when Elspeth was seated with her knitting, Marjorie reminded her of her promise. So Elspeth settled herself in her high-backed chair and began the following story:

"It was in the evil time, called the 'killing time' (you ken that I mean the persecution o' the Covenanters), that a young an' warthy couple were betrothed. The lad was called Wattie Fergusson, an' the name o' the lass was Maggie Burnes. Wattie was a farmer's son, an' Maggie

was the daughter o' a neeboring farmer. Baith had been brought up i' the faith o' Scotland, an' wad, if need be, suffer for it. But they neither courted nor coveted the sufferin'; their young lives were sweet to them for the sake o' each ither. The story goes that Maggie was vera bonnie, and I mak' nae doot she was; Scotland has an' aye has had mony bonnie daughters.

"Weel, lang before the dawn ane Sabbath morning a goodly, an' I may say a godly company came frae mony ways to meet in a remote an' mountainous place for the worship o' the triune God. In those days the people realized mair than they do noo the office o' each person o' the Trinity; they kenned an' claimed the feelin' o' sonship; they kenned that they were brought nigh the Faither by the bluid o' Christ, an' they kenned, mair ower, that the Holy Spirit was their Comforter an' the abidin' witness that they were born again an' had passed frae daith unto life.

"But I suppose, Marjorie, you want me to come to the story. Weel, the stars blinked brightly on Maggie an' Wattie that mornin' as they locked airms an' started to meet the ither at the place appointed for worship. They were happy in spite o' the trouble o' the times, for a young pair canna constantly feel the weight o' trouble when their hearts are bein' made light wi'

the company o' each ither. Sae Magge leuked up into Wattie's face wi' a glow o' pleasure that the early morn couldna hide, an' the youth gazed into Maggie's face weel pleased wi' the maid's confidence an' love.

“‘I think we shall hae a pleasant day; an' sin' I hae the company o' my wee sweetheart, I think I shall derive baith pleasure an' profit,’ said Wattie.

“‘Ay, dootless we baith wull, but we maunna let the pleasure o' the lang walk together break in upon the meditations we should hae in goin' to a place o' worship, an' especially a meetin' o' this kind, which, you ken, isna withoot peril.’

“‘You are richt there, Maggie; bluid has been spilled at sic meetin's, an' there is nae tellin' when it may happen again.’

“‘Let us houp that it wunna be the day,’ said Maggie.

“‘Ay, let us houp that no wizen-faced spy wull get on oor tracks an' sae bring us face to face wi' danger an' daith. But dinna think o' sic grave things the morn. I trow that either o' us wad stan' at oor post, whatever that may be. Noo let us gi'e oorsel's up to pleasant thoughts, for we maun soon join the ithers an' gang i' company.’

“‘Weel, nae doot mony pleasant an' loving

wards were spoken. At ony rate, they were unforgotten wards; not ane o' them passed frae the memory o' Maggie Burnes while she remembered aught.

"They were nearin' the place o' worship when Wattie was requested to stan' as watchman in the passage to the glen, where were already gathered mony worshippers. Maggie felt a great fear come over her as Wattie answered, 'I wull gang.' Wattie maun hae kenned it, for he paused to say, 'Courage, my dear Maggie; it is but richt that I should tak' my turn as watchman. I houp that it wunna be my duty to sound the note o' alarm, but if I maun, I wunna gi'e an uncertain sound, neither wull I flee frae duty. God be wi' you, love.'

"Puir Maggie got but little gude frae the meetin'; she didna feel to think about the worship, puir lass, an' her voice shook sairly as she joined wi' the great congregation and sang:

"O Lord, my God, in thee do I my confidence repose;
Save and deliver me from all my persecuting foes,
Lest that the enemy my soul should like a lion tear,
In pieces rending it while there is no deliverer."

"The psalm was scarcely ended when the warnin' note came frae the direction that Wattie had taken. Maggie's face turned deadly pale, an' a moment later the report of a gun was heard.

The worshippers took up airms, formed into line, an' stood upon the defensive. A few horsemen rode in through the pass, discharged some shots, saw the strength o' the Covenanters, then they wheeled round and went the way they came. A' was confusion for a while, an' naebody kenned that puir Maggie was missing until a body o' men went to find Wattie. He was dead, an' Maggie lay near him, swooned clear awa'. They brought the puir lass back to hersel', but she fainted again an' again. After a while a friend o' Wattie's got a horse an' took the puir forfairn lass before him, an' some ither lads bound Wattie's body to a board an' carried him sae. They went back over the same road that the twa had travelled i' the morn, baith sae fu' o' life an' houp.

"They said that Wattie wasna quite dead when Maggie found him, an' he tauld her na to greet for him; that they should meet again where trouble couldna come. Maggie wadna say muckle about it, for she felt that her grief maunna be meddled wi'; but she didna fail to do her duty in the warld as lang as she lived in it.

"Noo, Marjorie, you may think that my story is owre sober, but it is weel to ken somat o' the trials endured by oor countrymen to buy the privileges that we enjoy."

CHAPTER XIV.

MOTHERHOOD.

A YEAR slipped by, and when Roger returned to school Marjorie was not only accustomed to his absence, but there was something to divert her mind. A new life had awakened at the castle; Mrs. Ainslie was a mother. In the quaint old family cradle in which Marion herself had been rocked slept her little son. Lovely and lovable as Marion had ever been, new graces came with the new responsibilities. Her gentleness carried her father back to the time when she herself was an infant and her sweet young mother, his own Isabel, hung over her with tender solicitude. And yet she was not altogether like her mother, for though gentle, she had become so through discipline. The mother had possessed more natural sweetness than Marion; Marion the stronger will. Both were just to others, though the daughter was far quicker than the mother to claim justice for herself. The one would yield any point not including a moral wrong, and forgive, though her heart was breaking. The other could forgive too, but would not cheerfully submit to any

measures that interfered with her own plans. Elspeth read their characters correctly when she said, "There is this difference atween Leddy Marion an' Leddy Isabel. Leddy Isabel thought last an' least o' hersel', an' wad give a kiss for a blow; but Leddy Marion claims her own right, an' though she wull bear a blow without complaint, she hasna a kiss to give in return." And not till her lady became a mother did Elspeth say, "My leddy is mair like her mither than her faither after a'."

The birth of a male child was a cause of great joy to all the family. Sir William was delighted and at once asked to name him Kenneth Campbell, giving this as a reason for the request: "Kenneth was the name o' my grandfather and the last one o' the family wha was prospered. It may be that the prosperity o' the hoose o' Campbell wull come back wi' the revival o' the name."

Elspeth was a proud woman as she cared for the strong, healthy infant. She often communed with herself on the probabilities of the future, and always came around to this one t'ought, "This hoose isna to hae Ichabod written upon it yet."

The father and mother were not altogether in sympathy with these older people. To them the child was a blessing from the Lord, given not to

build up an earthly and a decaying inheritance, but to become an heir to an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." However, in compliance with Sir William's wishes the child was named Kenneth Campbell.

Marjorie Ainslie loved the little Kenneth with all the warmth of her affectionate nature. Lady Marion often said to herself, "Was ever a bairn mair welcome?" Then thinking of Him who was cradled in a manger, she went on, "Ay, there has been one at least, the Christ-child, born sae mony hundred years ago. For though rejected by mony, some believed on him an' rejoiced wi' exceeding joy."

There were two others who rejoiced over the birth of Lady Marion's son. One was of high and the other of low degree. Lady Annie sent her congratulations, and a promise of coming soon to see her "dear wee kinsman." Old Stephen Watson also manifested his interest. He tottered in, laid his hand on the head of the infant, and looked up as if invoking a blessing upon him. Turning slowly away, he said, "It wunna hurt the bairn to hae the blessing 'o' an auld mon, ane wha has measured oot the fu' span o' life an' leukin' back kens that the greatest gude to crave is peace wi' God through oor Lord Jesus Christ."

The little Kenneth was soon in a fair way to

be spoiled between Elspeth and Marjorie, not to say anything of the attentions of those nearer to him. The minute he began to cry he was Elspeth's "puir wee mon" or Marjorie's "dear wee cousin," and one or the other of his admirers wanted him in her arms all the time.

These were happy days for all. Mr. Ainslie and his wife felt that the long, dark period of their lives was completely bridged over by their present felicity, and they only remembered the affliction in order to notice how they had profited by it.

Marjorie felt that there would be no more dark days in Craggsby Castle. She had a homelike feeling and she was beloved by all the family. To Lady Marion she was as a younger sister. Besides, she had made a warm friend in Edith Grant. When Edith was at the castle the two girls were constantly together, and when Edith was gone Marjorie looked forward to her letters.

One day a letter came which contained an invitation to Marjorie to come to Perth and pay Edith a visit. Marjorie was delighted, and as no one had any serious objections, it was settled that she should go.

But there was one person outside of the family who did object. Graham Walker dreaded to have Marjorie go from home to form new acquaintan-

ces and to mingle in gay society before he had any conversation with her relative to his own hopes. So, as the time for her *départure* drew near, he went to the castle to see her. She was walking by herself through the castle grounds, and Graham rejoiced at the favorable opportunity that presented itself. After the usual greetings they seated themselves upon a bench under the shadow of the trees.

"I hear that you are goin' from hame for a lang visit, an' I had a wish to talk to you aboot a subject that lies near my heart. It maun be, Marjorie, that I hae given you to understand by ward or leuk, or baith, that I hae mair than a common interest i' you. Noo tell me if I haena."

"I hae thought sae sometimes, Graham, but I haena thought muckle aboot it, for this reason: I love God best, an' I wadna dare settle my affections upon ane wha doesna love him. Noo, I ken that you arena an unbeliever i' the broad sense o' the ward, but there is anither an' a closer meaning into which it wull be weel to leuk. If ane doesna believe in Christ as his ain personal Saviour he hasna savin' faith an' isna a true believer. If ane hasna taken Christ as his portion it canna be tauld if he ever wull. Ane may gang on to the end o' his life, his heart an' mind set on the pleasures o' this warld as if they wad niver end,

an' niver hae portion or spiritual communion wi' God's children."

"I see, you wad ken where I stand."

"Ay, if you seek to be a freend to me I wad ken if we are to agree touching the great question o' life, which I hold to be, Are we servants o' Christ or nae? an' not hoo large a fortune we can make."

"I haena been taught to leuk on life in sic a serious way, but I hae a regard for God's house an' I am seldom absent frae it. An' yet, Marjorie, to speak the truth, I wad be amaist afeared to sift my motives lest I should find that I hae a stronger desire to see your face than to meet Him who is in his temple."

"That is a wrang reason for bein' in God's house, Graham, an' I canna tell you hoo muckle you miss if you dinna hae a hamelike feelin' as soon as you cross the threshold o' the kirk. It is there, you ken, that the great and gude Faither has promised to meet his children."

"I didna ken that you could be sae grave. Ane wad think that you were a merry lass, you hae sic a cheerfu' face."

"I hope that I wull aye hae a cheerfu' face. If ony ane has a right to be cheerfu' it is ane wha kens that he has a freend in Jesus. I am young, but na sae young that mony haena died younger;

sae it is weel for me to mak' my callin' an' election sure."

"Hoo can ane mak' his election sure?"

"By warkin' together wi' God."

"Are we na elect accordin' to the foreknowledge o' God?"

"Ay, but it is through sanctification o' the Spirit an' belief in the truth."

"Weel, Marjorie, I see that you hae mair true wisdom than I hae; but I didna think to hae sic a conversation wi' you, neither did I tak' you to be sic a serious lass. Still I hae nae objection to ony degree o' Christian devotion sae lang as ane is as pleasant an' cheerfu' as you are. Sae why need there be ony question between us? Give me a bit ground for hope before you gang awa'."

"You didna quite tak' my meaning, it seems, Graham. The apostle says, 'Hoo can twa walk together except they be agreed?' Not that I think I am better than you are, but it is necessary that we should baith enter upon the same path."

"Weel, Marjorie, I amna sic as you wad like me to be; I wunna deceive you; but I long to walk life's path wi' you, an' you can lead me where you will."

"I maunna lead you; the Holy Spirit maun lead you. His is the only safe leading."

"A' that you say is vera gude. I canna find

ony fault wi' it, yet I amna satisfied. I want a promise, Marjorie. If you should love another it wad amaist be the death o' me. Hoo can I tell but you wull leave your heart where you are going?"

"Hoo can you tell that my heart wull gang to Perth at a'? Hoo can you tell that it wullna remain in the neeborhood o' Craggsby Castle?"

"Dinna trifle wi' me, Marjorie."

"I amna trifling, Graham. I could love you weel an' I knew that you were seekin' to follow in the footsteps o' oor divine Maister, not to please me, but because you belong to him, being purchased by his bluid."

Marjorie had grown very serious again, and the teardrops glistened in her eyes. Graham thought that she was very beautiful, but he knew not which he most admired, the lovely face or the firm principle that led her to obey God rather than the promptings of her own heart. He took her hand and carried it to his lips, and said, "I think more of you than ever before. May the Master you serve so conscientiously call me also into his service, that oor work an' worship be the same."

"Give mair earnest heed to his claims upon you an' you wull soon hear the call. Then close in wi' the offers o' mercy an' you wull be far happier. Folk think me light-hearted. I wad be

heavy-hearted if I couldna feel my Heavenly Father's smile resting upon me. I hope I haena caused you muckle sorrow because I hae spoken sae plainly, but I couldna say less."

"I see the reason in what you say, an' I am content sin' you wad like to think weel o' me. Pray for me, Marjorie, that I mayna stand langer outside o' the kingdom o' grace."

Graham walked slowly homeward, disposed to think well of what he had heard. He said aloud, "It maun be true; if religion is onything it is the needfu' thing, and I maunna put it off."

"I am glad that you hae come to that conclusion," said a voice close behind him, and looking round he saw the young parish minister. The two young men shook hands and walked together as long as their ways lay in the same direction. And from that hour they were friends.

Marjorie went at once to Mrs. Ainslie and told her the whole story.

"Dear lass," said Mrs. Ainslie, "I didna think that you had sae muckle consideration. I kenned weel that you were a Christian, but not all Christians consider whether God is pleased wi' their choice. God bless you in your faithfulness to him."

"Why, Aunt Marion, do folk, pious folk, wed without mindin' the apostle's injunction? I think

that a' wha hae taken the vows o' the kirk upon them should see that they dinna choose a life companion wha wadna help them on in the Christian life."

"I wish that it were sae, dear," answered Mrs. Ainslie, kissing the sweet, open face. Then she thought long on the years of her own trouble, and she breathed a prayer that if it should please God no such trouble should come to Marjorie.

CHAPTER XV.

MARJORIE.

MARJORIE travelled to Perth in company with a fellow-townsmen. When she reached her journey's end she was met by Edith Grant and her father. Mr. Grant's greeting was very cordial and Edith was delighted to see her. When they arrived at the house Mrs. Grant met Marjorie in the door and made her feel at home at once. Marjorie enjoyed herself very much until Edith's tall, dark-eyed brother came home.

He was unlike the fair Edith in disposition as well as in his looks. The young man seemed to have formed the idea that he was born to rule. Marjorie had been under the same roof but a few days before she understood that the deference shown him by the family was not given because he deserved it, but because he demanded it. She saw also that the happiness of the family was in a measure subject to his caprice.

Marjorie tried to shun his society as much as possible without seeming rude. Archie saw that she did not desire his company, and this was reason enough for him to try to make it necessary to

her. He was not accustomed to be overlooked, and Marjorie's straightforward, independent manner and her lack of appreciation of him angered him. But he tried to conceal this and became attentive even to obtrusiveness.

He explained to Edith, "I do not care so much for the bright little country lass, but I will not allow her to show such disregard of me."

"I do not think that her manner towards you comes from disregard. It may be chargeable to the very modest estimate that she has of herself. She probably thinks that her society is not interesting and she takes care not to force it upon you."

"Nonsense. I know she dislikes me."

"Well, if she dislikes you you cannot change her ideas as easily as you think. She has a mind of her own, and a very good one too. You just now admitted that you do not care for her; she has much discernment and will understand your motives. You want only to gratify your vanity, Archie, and the whole plan is not right. She is a dear, good lass, and I have not invited her here to give her any unhappiness. I wish you to be civil to her and no more."

"I want no advice from you, Edith," answered her brother as he left the room.

As Archie Graham saw Marjorie day after day

he really began to admire her. But she did not change her opinion of the young man, and her visit bade fair to be an unpleasant one. She wrote to Mrs. Ainslie asking her to send for her sooner than had been arranged when she left home.

Meantime Graham Walker was undergoing a new experience. His grandfather was taken very ill, and it soon became evident that his days were numbered. The sick man was uneasy and anxious and could not endure to have Graham leave him. This confinement was quite a task for the young man, for never before had he been shut in a sickroom from light and sunshine.

"I tell you, lad, it is a fearfu' thing to dee," said Felix one day. "Hae you naething to say to your auld deein' grandfaither? Hae you na a ward o' comfort, you wha are sae fu' o' life an' hope, an' mine clean gone? I tell you I am amaist dead wi' fear alane, withoot the pain that amaist rives my bones an' flesh asunder. Eh! it is wae-some, it is wae-some."

"I wull gang for the minister, grandfaither. He is a pleasant, friendly gentleman, an' wull doubtless tell you something that wull comfort you."

"He wull tell me that I haena been to the kirk sin' five years this spring, an' it is the truth an' no lee. Better for me if it were a lee."

“He wullna tell you that; he wull tell you to leuk awa' to the Saviour o' sinners, sin' you feel that you are ane.”

“What gude wull that do? That time that He himsel' spake o' has come. I amna a fule i' the Scriptures; better for me if I were; an' I mind what He said, ward for ward. Listen to them :

“‘But ye hae set at naught a' my counsel, an' would none o' my reproof; I also wull laugh at your calamity; I wull mock when your fear cometh, when your fear cometh as desolation, an' your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress an' anguish cometh upon you.’

“Hae I na come to that time noo?”

“O grandfaither, it is dreadfu', as you say; but let me gang for the minister; he wull pray wi' you.”

“Nae, I wunna stay alane when you are gone. Send ane o' the servants. I suppose the wark is bein' badly dune, an' auld Felix an' his possessions wull gang to the deil thegither. Weel, it is a' over noo. Nae, it isna; there is somat to come after, an' I wush there wasna. That place, that dreadfu' place, ‘where their worin dieth not.’ Graham, lad, hoo is it? I am that feared that I canna think. Ah, me, that I had been wise, that I had considered my latter end! Graham, you

maunna put off repentance. I haena preached to you before, but I preach to you noo upon the confines o' hell, I fear; an' I say wi' a' the earnestness o' a doomed soul, mak' your peace wi' God."

The minister's words and prayers brought but little relief to Felix, and the last words that he said to him were, "There isna muckle hope for me, but hae a care over the lad. Dinna let him do as I hae dune."

The old man died after a few days' illness, and Graham was left alone. He felt sad and dispirited; he never could be the same. He often thought of Marjorie, of her trust and her happiness. His pastor was faithful to him, for he was not only bound by the usual obligation to watch for souls, but he could not forget the dying injunction of the unhappy grandfather.

As soon as Mrs. Ainslie received Marjorie's letter she sent for her to return home. She had missed the girl every day and was glad that she was to be among them again. The Grant family wondered why Mrs. Ainslie had changed her plans and shortened Marjorie's stay, but none except Edith knew the cause, and she kept her own counsel.

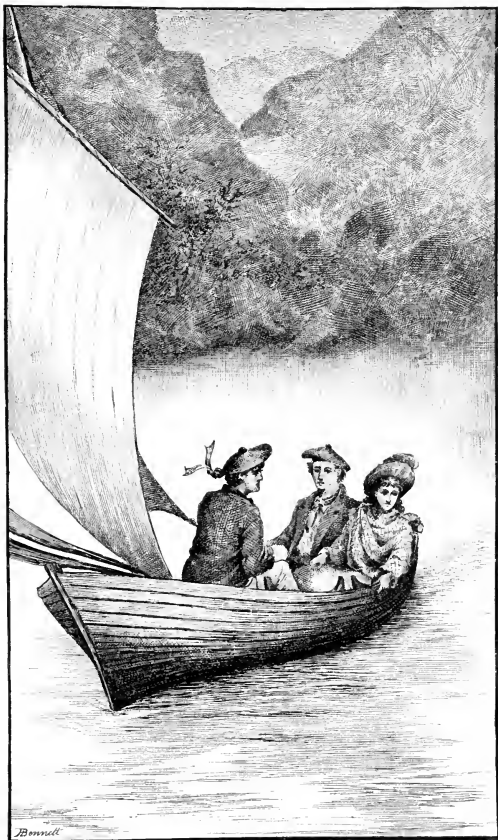
Archie Grant was disappointed and he tried more than ever to make a good impression. He even avowed his attachment to Marjorie, but she

treated the matter very lightly, as she thought that Archie's affections were not very deeply involved.

Marjorie received a joyful welcome from the friends at home. All told her how they had missed her, and Sir William added, "Weel, lassie, I didna ken hoo muckle store we set by you."

Marjorie was very sorry for Graham when she knew what he had suffered, and when she saw him she was surprised to see how changed he seemed, for he looked as if he had been sick himself. He was nearly ill between grief for his grandfather's unhappy end and concern about his own soul. Yet she liked the truthful, earnest look that he wore, and she felt that he was no deceiver. They had a long talk about religion, but nothing was said at that time in regard to their earthly friendship. His anxiety about spiritual things was greater than his care for his earthly happiness. When, a few months later, he partook of the Lord's Supper, Marjorie felt satisfied that his conversion was genuine.

The year slipped by and Roger was soon expected home. Edith Grant had promised to visit Marjorie, and she hinted that Archie wished to accompany her. This last news was anything but agreeable to Marjorie, so she was not sorry that about that time Graham renewed his atten-



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tions. There was now no fear in her mind that they would not agree in matters of religion, and the promise was soon given that made Graham a happy man.

Marjorie wrote to Edith, inclosing an invitation to her brother, but in another part of the letter she announced her engagement to Graham, and the consequence was that Archie did not go to the castle at all. Although no one said so, all felt relieved that he did not come, nor was Edith less pleased than the others. The four young people passed a very pleasant summer. Marjorie and Graham were as happy as they could well be, and the moonlight sails upon the lake were very conducive to the growth of friendship between Edith and Roger.

Graham insisted upon a speedy marriage, and Marjorie was nothing loath, as she knew how to stand at the head of household affairs. So one of the last days of Roger's vacation was fixed for his sister's wedding-day. Sir William wished her to have a wedding not unlike his daughter's, but this was not in accordance with Marjorie's ideas; still she did not wish to oppose the wishes of one to whom she owed so much.

Before the preparations were begun something occurred to cast a shadow over the family at the castle: old Stephen Watson yielded up his spirit

after a few days' sickness. Roger was his faithful attendant, and he felt more than repaid for all the time and labor he bestowed upon the lonely man. After Stephen was laid in the kirkyard by Hannah, nothing remained to be done but to deliver up his effects to his kindred and to coax the poor howling dog to the castle. Then silence fell in and around old Stephen's cottage.

It was nothing nearer than the death of a servant, but the event led Sir William to remember that the longest life must end. He was very grave in those days, and he bade Marjorie do as she liked about the wedding. She preferred to have a quiet wedding with a few friends present.

So she had her way. They were married as soon as the candles were lighted. After a pleasant evening one of Graham's servants came with the carriage to convey the master and his wife home.

As the bridal pair rode away there were the usual comments that attend an event of the kind.

"I hope she wull be happy in her new hame," said Sir William; "an' I think she wull, for happiness is something that she aye carries wi' her."

CHAPTER XVI.

SORROW AT THE CASTLE.

LITTLE Kenneth Ainslie was about two years old when Mrs. Ainslie gave birth to a daughter. Elspeth at once pronounced it a "winsome wee thing," and all who saw the child agreed with her.

Sir William said, "I named the laddie, and I wad like weel to name this wee lass also."

Mrs. Ainslie smiled and asked her father to speak the name, for she was quite sure that it was the name she herself had chosen.

Sir William hesitated but a moment, then said, "Ca' her Isabel; it wull please me to hear the name again."

"It wull please me too, faither, an' I think no one wull object."

So the infant was named Isabel, and the name pleased Lady Annie not less than Sir William. She came to the castle and spent several months. She had few near friends, and she had reached that age when she clung closer than ever to her kindred. Mrs. Ainslie was sorry when she left the castle, and she would have kept her still

longer had she known how soon sorrow was to come to her again. Lady Annie had scarcely reached her home before the lovely little Isabel passed away from those who cherished her so fondly.

The hearts of the father and mother were sorely smitten, and the grandfather refused to be comforted.

Elspeth missed the "dear bairn," but she more than once hinted that one could "grieve owre muckle." One day she said to Mrs. Ainslie, "My leddy, you mind me o' a woman that I ance heard tell o'. She had three bonnie bairns and ane o' them died. Then the puir mither grieved the haill time; she wadna be comforted. Every night she dreamed o' the dead bairn, dreamed that she had him in her arms; but she wad wake greetin' an' find her arms empty. Weel, ane night she had a dream and it was this: A vera wise an' gude person came to her an' said, 'What meaneth the greetin' that sounds in my ears? What aileth thee?'

"An' she made answer, 'I mourn for my bairn, noo mine nae mair.'

"Where is the bairn? Wha took him?" asked the stranger.

"He is in heaven; God took him.'

"Had God nae a right to take him?"

“‘Ay, I canna deny that he gave him to me; but I wush that he had never been gi’en sin’ I couldna keep him.’

“‘Brought he nae joy to you that you canna lose? Canna you remember his bit smiles as you remember the flowers o’ simmer? Some things be tae pure to stay upon earth; they but flit before us an’ are awa’. You maunna wush to keep a’ that you grasp. When onything is taken frae you, it is for your gude. It isna gude for you to haud it or it isna gude for that which is taken to stay with you.’

“‘Weel, I wad hae kept my bairn an’ I could.’

“‘Hae you none left?’

“‘Ay, I hae twa.’

“‘An’ to whom do they belong mair than to yoursel’?’

“‘To God wha gave them to me. But why do you frighten me by speirin’ aboot them?’

“‘Because you hae clean forgotten your mercies. You should be thankfu’ that God left you twa bairns. Noo let there be nae mair murmurings; for though God doesna reap where he hasna sown, wha shall say that he maunna reap where he has sown? Do you weel to grudge him ane o’ the bairns to sit before him in his kingdom? You ken that He wha spake as never mon spake said,

"In heaven their angels do always behold the face o' my Faither which is in heaven." An sin' the wee bairn sees God's face, I trow he maun hae a pleasanter sight than the twa you hae wi' you, sin' they canna win a smile frae you. You gi'e them sad looks, an' if they stay wi' you they wull come to fear that God does-na ken best. It may be that they too wull be taken frae you. Mind, noo, nae mair bitter, rebellious tears.'

"An' the next morning the mither smiled doon upon the wee bairns as soon as their e'en were open, an' they put their arms about her neck an' cried, 'O mither, do you love us tae?'

"Then the mither made answer, 'My dear bairns, God kens that I love you. Hoo could you doot it?'

"'Because you didna show it, mither.'

"Then was the mither convinced that the truth had been told her in her dream, an' the wee lads never again saw her greet for their dead brither."

Mrs. Ainslie listened with interest to Elspeth's story, and when it was ended she drew little Kenneth to her and left many a kiss upon his upturned face.

Marjorie often came to the castle in those days, for she sympathized with the bereaved friends.

Her presence was like sunshine, and young as she was, she said many comforting words to her aunt and uncle.

Then there came a long and very precious letter from Lady Annie, in which she wrote, "I shed tears myself over the death of the wee infant; yet I ken that however tenderly the little one may have been cared for here, heaven has joys far exceeding any joy that human love can devise or human thoughts conceive of. I am sure, my dear Marion, that you wull turn to your Saviour in your sorrow and then you wullna find your grief overmastering."

In the spring a family moved into old Stephen's cottage. Aleck Fisher was the name of the new farm-hand. He had a wife and four children, all of whom were boys. It seemed strange to the family at the castle to look out and see children playing around the door of the cot so long occupied by a childless couple, and Sir William whiled away many a weary hour watching the merry pranks of the unsuspecting little urchins. He soon learned their names, and distinguished them thus: "Sandy is the ane wi' the red head; Rab is the ane wi' the black head; Tam is the ane wi' the muckle head; an' Geordie is the ane wi' the white head."

Their mother was a good woman; but she

was an easy-going person, a fact of which the lads were already aware. The father was a different parent and when he was at home the children were very quiet and obedient, and to his question, "Hae a' the bairns been gude?" the mother would answer, "Vera gude, Aleck, vera gude," although they had "worried her the haill day," as she had more than once told them. Thus the boys soon caught the idea that all was well as long as their father did not know of their ill-behavior. This management would have done much towards spoiling the children but for the explanation the mother gave them. "You see, lads, your faither works hard to give us bread, sae I diinna like to fash his head wi' oor troubles." But if she had carefully examined her motives, she would have known she feared that the father would correct the lads.

Sir William was not long in selecting a favorite among the boys, and it was the one with the "muckle head." "Gude for wee Tam," he often said as he watched a game or scuffle where Tom was victorious. Altogether it was a pleasant thing to have the children under his sight so much. The aged need to see life and activity around them in order to keep their own spirits young, and Sir William was glad that the little ones often diverted his mind from his aches and

pains. When tired of reading and of resting too—for Mr. Ainslie took all the care of the estate upon himself—he was often led back to his own boyhood by watching the “wee rogues” at their sports. And not unfrequently he was led to remember that there is a world where none ever grow old; then would come a feeling not unlike a willingness to be there.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHANGES.

DURING the next few years many things of interest happened to our friends. Among the sad events were the death of Lady Annie and the severe sickness of the faithful Elspeth; among the pleasant ones were the birth of another daughter at the castle and also the birth of a son at the Cameron place.

But to tell of the events in the order that they happened would lead us first to the old farmhouse. Marjorie and Graham thought that there never was a fairer child, and they were sure that the old place could never be unattractive to them since it was the home of their little son. Nor were they alone in thinking so; the old servants, who held their places so long under Felix only to procure their "sair-worn penny fee," now felt that all was changed. They said to each other, "Wha ever could hae thought to find pleasure i' warkin' here?"

And they could best judge of the change. True, Graham had lived a few years with his grandfather, but he had been a favorite with the

old man. When his daughter died, Felix took the little Graham to his home and tried to make him happy. Yet he made no effort to soften the hard places in the life of those who had grown old in his service. But Marjorie's coming proved to the two old house servants, Jean and Nelly Hughs, that all service was not hard service, and Graham's different management on the farm lightened the burden of those who toiled amid the cold of winter and the depressing heat of the summer's sun.

Nor was this all that was changed. The voice of prayer was never heard in the house of Felix Cameron, while cursing and swearing were not strange sounds. Now the order was reversed, for daily did prayer ascend to the Father of mercies, while profanity was prohibited.

"God be praised that we hae lived to see this day!" said old Jean Hughs to her sister.

"You may well giv the praise to Him wha has worked the pleasing change. It minds me o' oor ain hame."

"Ay, it is like it. I trow that we will be better prepared to gang to oor account sin' we live wi' Christian folk."

Elsbeth often enjoyed a run down to Marjorie's, but soon after the little son was born Elsbeth's visits were discontinued for a long time. She fell

sick and was the object of much solicitude not only to the family at the castle, but also to Marjorie. A fever had prostrated Elspeth. She was very delirious and the name of Robin was often on her lips. "Ay, I am coming, Robin," or "It is a lang time sin' I hae seen you, Robin;" some such sentence she often uttered, and the watchers would shake their heads and say, "She is goin' to him."

But she did not then go to Robin. The fever abated, and then came the long, wearing, yet patient waiting for health to come again.

"I think I maun be vera sick," said Elspeth to Marjorie one day.

"You hae been vera sick, but you are better noo, or you will be after a bit."

"Do you think sae, Marjorie? I think that I wunna be better, for I am that feckless that I can hardly lift my hand. I am sae weary, tae, that I feel that I could just close my e'en an' dee."

"You maunna dee, Elspeth."

"That will be as the gude Lord thinks best," returned the sick woman, closing her eyes wearily. Mrs. Ainslie looked at her and thought that probably the Lord was about to summon Elspeth to the other world.

But in a few weeks her old friend was sitting in an easy-chair, and she said, "I wush that I

could hae the wee lass upon my knees. You ken that I hae scarcely set e'en on her yet."

Mrs. Ainslie brought the child and laid it in Elspeth's arms. She passed her hand gently over the child's head, smoothing the hair, saying, "Dear wee lassie, bonnie wee lassie! Auld Elspeth ance thought that she wad never haud you i' her arms."

She seemed to be perfectly happy with the babe in her arms and Kenneth standing by her knee.

"Hae you missed me, my bairn?" she asked Kenneth one day.

"Ay, I hae, an' I heard some folk say that you wad dee; but you wunna dee noo, Elspeth, wull you?"

"I am in nae muckle danger noo, I am thinkin', but I canna say. Sic things are wi' God, in his hands, an' he alane kens oor time, my wee man."

"Weel, I hope that you wull live a lang, lang time, onyway," answered the child.

In a few days Elspeth had improved so much that she took a short walk in the direction of the "burnie." She knew that the summer days were over, but she was not prepared for the change in the face of nature. The verdure that had feasted her eyes when she last sought the brookside was

blackened by the frost and the air was, crisp and cold; still, the sun shone brightly and its golden light lay on the steep hillsides, warming the few plants that had braved the chilling air of autumn. It also warmed the heart and hopes of Elspeth Lundie.

“It is God’s token to me the morn,” she said, encouraged. “If it hadna been for the bright sunlight I might hae had a gloomy walk amang the deed flowers that I left sae bright an’ fair. Sae it aye is; God aye puts something pleasant over against that which wad be likely to cast oor hearts doon. He is sic a perfect Faither to us, sae tender an’ sae mindfu’, although he is King o’ kings an’ Lord o’ lords,” she murmured as she turned to look upon the mountains and the lake, the rugged rocks and the winding stream. The dead leaves rustled beneath her feet and she sighed a little that she must tread upon them. But she checked herself, saying, “I maunna fret at the fate o’ the bonnie green things; they hae served their turn an’ answered their creation. May I do as weel; an’ when I am called to lie beneath the ground where they rustle, when soul an’ body shall hae parted company till the resurrection morn, I shall ken the happiness o’ the redeemed i’ the paradise o’ God.”

She went slowly towards the house, while her

heart was full of the subject of changes, changes that come to animate and inanimate things. Mrs. Ainslie came to meet her, for she feared that Elspeth would, in the joy of her freedom, walk too far and tax her strength.

"I am seeking you, Elspeth," she said.

"Are you though? That is muckle trouble for you to take for the likes o' me; but you hae done muckle mair for me during the weeks that I hae been sick. I hae been a great trouble to you, my leddy, an' I hae shed mony a tear on the saft pillows that you put under my head, I was that overcome by your kindness. But noo that I am well again, an' haena shared the fate o' the deed things aboot me, it wull be my first care to be mair faithfu' to you."

"I am at a loss to ken hoo you could be mair faithfu', Elspeth," said Mrs. Ainslie, smiling. "As for the care that I had during your sickness, I was grieved that I could not minister to your wants mair than I did. It was Marjorie's hand ofttimes that smoothed your pillow."

"I ken that. Marjorie is wullin' an' handy, but your touch is sae saft an' restfu', my dear leddy."

They had reached the castle, but Elspeth's mind was not diverted from the thoughts that had filled it during her walk, and she said, "Auld age

maun be vera sad to unbelievers. The last leuk o' onything pleasant is apt to make us sad, even when we ken that we are to hae mair an' newer delights. But what maun it be for ane to ken that he maun close his e'en upon this pleasant warld and its goodly sights; to ken that he maun close his ear to the voices of freends, the sang o' the birds, an' the sighing o' the simmer breeze, an' never mair see onything delightfu', never mair hear a joyfu' sound! I tell you it maun be dreadfu'!"

Sir William entered the room in time to hear the last sentence, and he asked, "Of what are you speakin' sae earnestly, gude Elspeth?"

"I was speakin' o' the certainty o' the change that maun come to auld age, and hoo sad it maun be to the unbeliever."

"Were you thinkin' o' your auld maister, Elspeth?"

"Na in particular the noo."

"Weel, I wish that you wad think o' me, especially when you are on your knees, for I hae lived tae lang withoot the friendship o' Him whose bluid cleanseth frae a' sin. An' you tae, my dear daughter, think often in like manner o' your auld faither, for he is amaist dune wi' this life, an' its wasted years trouble his vera soul."

This was said with a tremulous voice. It was

certain that Sir William had at last discovered the folly of a worldly life. Tears dimmed the eyes of Mrs. Ainslie, and the choking sensation in her throat forbade utterance, but Elspeth's voice framed the hearty words, "God be praised that you hae come at last to ken your entire dependence on the merits o' the Saviour." This conversation was followed by many more on the same subject, and before many weeks Sir William partook of the sacrament in the modest little kirk where he had long been an occasional attendant.

Mrs. Ainslie was comforted for the loss of the little Isabel by the birth of her second little daughter. It was a fine, healthy child, and Sir William feelingly remarked, "It makes it seem as if we had the wee lass back again." It was laid in its mother's arms during Elspeth's illness, and so slowly did health come back to the old nurse that the child was several weeks old before she had the strength to attend it.

Great was Elspeth's joy when she was well enough to resume all of her duties and responsibilities. The children, especially the baby, received much of her attention; but Mrs. Ainslie was a mother in the true sense of the word, and no one, not even Elspeth, must defraud her of the pleasure of caring for her children. She did not

name the infant for some time. But when Lady Annie died, Mrs. Ainslie in her grief for the loss of her friend and kinswoman called the child Annie.

When Lady Annie's will was opened it was found that she had left a large sum of money to Mrs. Ainslie, but she had left the bulk of her property to Edith Grant's father, he being nearer of kin. Archie Grant was disappointed, for he expected to be remembered; but Lady Annie saw fit to make a different disposal of her property.

When Mrs. Ainslie came into possession of her money she wished to buy back the land that her father had sold when in his straits. Graham Walker readily consented to part with the property, and the bargain was soon completed. Although Sir William's heart was no longer set upon worldly treasures, yet he rejoiced that the ancient patrimony was once more entire, that the Campbell family owned every acre up to the ancient landmarks. Marion herself found no little pleasure in the thought that her son would inherit Craggsby Castle with all that had belonged to it in the days of the ancestor for whom he was named.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROGER'S SECRET.

ROGER's school-days were over and he returned home to rest, as was supposed; but any close observer could have seen that he did not rest even when he seemed most idle. Marjorie complained because he spent so little time at the farmhouse, and though he was pleasant to all at the castle, he spent much of his time in his room. His uncle more than once rallied him upon his exclusiveness, and Roger merely laughed and made no reply, neither did he change his course, but he became paler and thinner every day.

At last Sir William spoke out. "Roger, lad, I wanna hae it; you maun e'en gang to the field an' do a bit wark. You ken that you are as a son to me, an' I wanna hae sic a white face around. Sae gang oot an' do something or do naething, as you like, but get the sun an' air an' a bit o' color in your cheeks; an' if that wanna do I wull get a doctor for you."

Thus closely watched, Roger spent more time out of doors; but anywhere, on a stone under the shade of the hedgerow, at the brookside, or on the

margin of the quiet lake, he seemed to be thinking.

Marjorie was the first to solve the mystery. It was one evening when she was at the castle and all the family were complaining of Roger's devotion to some secret purpose that Marjorie exclaimed, "The book, the book! Is it about a haunted hoose, Roger? an' what do you ca' it?"

Roger was not a little annoyed that his secret was a secret no longer; still he laughed and replied, "It is called 'The Testimony of the Walls.' "

After it was understood that Roger was writing a book he was left to himself, with a caution to take care of his health. Sir William said, "I ken noo that you arena in ony trouble that is like to drive you daft, so on wi' your buik. I want to see it mysel', an' I ken that my years are but few."

Sir William did live to see Roger's book in print, and he as well as the rest of the family was very proud of it. The uncle had often wished that Roger was less imaginative, but after reading the book he was satisfied that he was as he was.

You may be sure that Elspeth was interested in Roger's success. A copy of the book lay in a convenient place, and whenever she had a spare moment she would don her heavy steel-bowed

spectacles and be lost in the volume. Not many days elapsed before she had read it once; but she was not satisfied with that, and she read it again. Thus she obtained a sufficient knowledge of it to add its stories to those that she treasured in her memory.

It was not long before she had an opportunity to rehearse them to the Hughs sisters, for they had become very good friends since Marjorie went to live at the farmhouse. As was very natural, Elspeth often spoke to them in praise of their young mistress and her brother, for were they not the "Ainslie bairns" of other days and still dear to her heart?

Once, when she was seated with her knitting by the fire in Marjorie Walker's kitchen, Jean Hughs said, "I hear that young Ainslie has written a book. I wad like to ken what it is aboot."

Elspeth replied, "I hae nae doot but I can gi'e you an understanding aboot the story or the stories that it contains. It is aboot ane family, but it is a family o' five generations, an' their lives dinna run in ane groove, you ken. Let me think a bit; yes, five generations: the last son's family, his faither's family, his grandfaither's, his great-grandfaither's, an' his great-great-grandfaither's families. Weel, a' that lad imagines aboot those folk is just wonderfu'. I can aye re-

member a gude story mysel', but I canna mak' up ane."

Jean and Nelly nodded assent, and Elspeth went on: "It begins somat like this: Lang ago, when there was a sair feud atween the chiefs o' twa Highland clans, there was a secret merriage atween the son o' ane an' the daughter o' anither, an' baith the bride an' the groom laid hands on a' the valuables that they could come to in the hooses of their faithers an' gaed awa'. I canna tell just where they went, but it was far frae their hames. Weel, they gaed i' the night-time, an' sic surprise an' sic anger an' sic mourning as there was i' the morn when baith chiefs missed their firstborn, their hoarded siller, an' their best gear. But the meaning o' it was soon kenned, and naebody dooted that fair Margaret and brave Roderick had gane together. The young folk kenned that their parents wad never consent to their merriage, an' they loved each ither weel.

"When the parents found oot that the merriage had really taken place they didna pursue their bairns, but they were that angry that they counted them as deed. Only the mither o' Margaret wept in secret, believing that she should see her daughter nae mair. An' there were tears in Margaret's eyes as she was left alane day after day. She had nae company but a shepherd's wife

an' her childish auld mither a' the time that Roderick was awa' building a hame for her.

"It was a sma' but strang castle that he built, an' I mind noo that it was amang the mountains that are situate between the river Spey an' the river Dee, but weel to the west an' far frae the mouths o' the rivers. Weel, lanely as Margaret was an' a bit hamesick forbye, she aye had a smile o' welcome when her husband rode up at nightfa'.

"At last, when Margaret went to the home that Roderick had prepared for her, she didna forget that lowly woman wi' whom she had become sae well acquainted. Through her she got servants that were faithfu' an' gude. But the leddy's hame was ruder than her faither's, an', mairover, she missed her gentle mither. Sae the walls o' the castle often inclosed a heavy-hearted wife. But after a bit, when Roderick was the proud an' happy faither o' a wee son, she left off sighing an' fancied that she wad never be unhappy again. She sang sweet cradle songs to the wee ane wha lay at her breast, an' the yearnin' for her mither seemed to dee oot i' the gladness o' her ain mitherhood.

"One evening, when she had been five years frae her early hame, an auld servant of her faither's stood before her door.

“ ‘Come in, Alan,’ said Margaret; ‘but I see you are the bearer o’ evil tidings.’ ”

“ ‘I am that,’ said he. ‘Your mither is sick unto death, and I am come to convey her dyin’ message to her far-awa’ daughter.’ ”

“ ‘Fu’ lovin’ an’ tender were the wards that he spake to the sad leddy, an’ they were the mither’s wards repeated, you ken. Weel, she fell a-greetin’, an’ she grat till her e’en were red. Then was Roderick wroth, an’ he said, ‘You hae shed tears enough. You show plainly that your heart is but half wi’ me. I trow that you wadna greet sae sairly an’ I lay deed before you.’ An’ his face grew dark wi’ rage that she sae weel remembered the hame he had taken her frae. The puir leddy bent her tearfu’ face over the curly head o’ her wee lad an’ the fountain o’ her tears dried up, but her heart was a’ the heavier. She longed to ask her mither’s forgiveness through Alan, but she daredna do sae. She saw the auld mon depart, an’ her heart was amaist breakin’ as she said, ‘Gi’e mither my love.’ Eh, what a burden there was upon her heart! The walls around seemed to gi’e an answering sound that mocked her grief, an’ her footfa’ on the floor sent oot the sound, ‘Alane, alane!’ ”

“ ‘But a mair heedfu’ wife than this same Margaret there couldna be. Nae wish o’ her hus-

band's could shape itself into wards before she set about to grant it an' to please him in a' things. She clean forgot hersel' in her devotion to Roderick and Cuthbert her son. It was easy to see frae her leuk that she thought not o' hersel', for her e'e grew large an' her cheek became pale an' thin, an' the pitifu' servants whispered amang themselves, 'The mistress wull dee.' A' the while Roderick loved his wife in his ain way. It was a love, you ken, that demanded a' her heart's affections, that wad break doon a' the cherished memories o' other days; an' yet he demanded the right to divert himsel' in the chase 'an' sic-like sports for days together. He didna stop to see that Margaret was unhappy, that her cheek was owre fair an' her ance red lips were owre pale. He didna hear the oft-heaved sigh, but the walls were the silent witnesses o' them. 'The puir led-dy wad oft sit in the chimney corner wi' her heid bent upon her breast, an' she wad ask hersel' if happiness could ever come back to her heart; an' the wild winds answered hoarsely doon the wide chimney, 'Never mair, never mair!'

"In her sorrow she bethought hersel' o' the dear, compassionate Lord an' o' the prayer he gave us. Although in her haste to leave her father's hame she hadna taken her Bible, she couldna be robbed o' the comfort o' that prayer, for she

kenned it ward for ward. She was wont to say it reverently, an' then to add, 'O Lord Jesus, if it isna wrang, I will put this muckle to thine ain prayer: Prepare me to dee i' peace wi' thee, an' guide my bairn that he doesna grow up to be a sinfu' mon.'

"Weel, grief is a great slayer o' hearts, you ken, especially when it is pent up, and Margaret wadna think to tell the servants or ony ane that she was just pinin' awa' for companionship. If she had been a widow it wad hae done to tell it, but sin' her husband was living she wadna mak' sic an admission. She thought that she wad live till Cuthbert came to years o' understandin', but she didna. She had nae human comforter, the buik says, an' this was weel, else she wadna hae been in sic earnest to win her way to the divine Comforter. Him she found, an' she died believing that she wad live again where disappointment an' sorrow canna follow.

"Roderick never merried again, but the death of his wife didna soften him. He missed her an' he blamed God that she was awa'. He was proud o' his bairn an' he longed for the time to come when he could be trained to a' the sports that he himsel' loved sae weel. Scarce had Cuthbert reached mon's stature when his faither was that crippled that he couldna lift himsel'

again. Eh! but then there were sounds for the walls to hear. An' sounds they were that amaist made them cry oot wi' shame, for it was mon cursin' his Maker. Roderick grew a waur mon day after day, for when trouble doesna mak' a mon better it aye mak's him waur. Weel, after a few years daith came, an' Roderick, although he should hae been in the prime o' life, was called awa' to answer for a wasted life.

"Weel, here I am but through the first generation, an' the evening is far spent an' my yarn is knitted up. I canna tell you mair aboot the buik to-night, but gin you wish to hear the rest, I wull come again."

"Weel, come soon, Elspeth, for I like the story weel," said Jean Hughs, and her sister repeated the request.

CHAPTER XIX.

ELSPETH AT THE FARMHOUSE.

A FEW days later Elspeth went again to the old farmhouse to spend the evening. The Hughs sisters came and sat down with an expectant look on their faces, and Elspeth began,

“Weel, where was I? Oh, I ken. Roderick died an’ Cuthbert was left alane. He merried a bonnie-faced shepherdess, an’ Mysie, for that was her name, was as good as she was bonnie. There was noo a happy family in the hame amang the mountains. Sons and daughters were born to Cuthbert and Mysie. Gude bairns they were too, a’ but ane wha was named Roderick. This ane seemed to justify the sayin’ that bairns are like those for whom they are named. He seemed to hae the same reckless daring that led his grandfather to persuade Margaret to leave her hame, the same selfish spirit that led him to forget her happiness in seekin’ his ain. But his parents kenned weel hoo to rule in their family. Mysie hadna had a wise, stern faither for nothing. She tried to rear up her bairns in the way that they should gang, an’ she oft told them, ‘Mind, I ex-

pect you to do richt.' But the strang, firm leadin' o' Roderick's parents made him deceitfu'; he was aye after some underhanded trick. He wasna content wi' gaen wrang himsel', but he aye tried to lead his brither awa' wi' him. When he tried to persuade Gilbert to do onything vera bad, he made this answer: 'Nae, Roderick, I maun behave myself; for mither expects it o' me.'

" 'Mither expects it o' me, too, Gilbert.'

" 'Mair shame to you that you disappoint her, Roderick Stewart.'

" 'As sure as daith, Gilbert, you are a coward,' Roderick replied.

" 'You are waur than a coward, for if you hae spirit, it isna o' the richt kind.'

" 'Then they had mony a hasty ward between them, but Gilbert wadna gi'e in. Mony a strife they had while they were lads, ane pullin' the richt way and the ither pullin' the wrang way, an' when they grew to manhood the case was nae different. At last Roderick said to his brither, 'I am gaen to rin awa'.'

" 'Where wull you gang?'

" 'Where wull I gang? Anywhere frae this.'

" 'What for?'

" 'For gude reasons. I want to better my condition.'

"Gilbert supposed that this was but an idle threat, an' it went oot o' his mind. But ane morn Roderick couldna be found. His parents were sairly grieved as day after day went by an' they could gain no tidings o' him. They had ane gude son left an' three dutifu' daughters, an' they comforted their hearts as best they could, giving their absent son to God's keepin'; for the mither kenned weel hoo to pray.

"Roderick was far frae following the peaceful avocations of his family; he was bound to get gain by fair or by foul means. Sae far did greed rule in his heart that mony a traveller emptied his pock that he might win past Roderick wi' his life. Ane dark night, when a traveller refused to gi'e him his purse an' seemed to be a match for him, Roderick drew his dirk an' was about to plunge it into the breast o' his brither mon, little thinkin' that it was his vera ain brither. But it was sae. It seemed that some gude still spake oot in this bad mon's heart. He threw doon the dirk an' said, 'I maun hand back; I maun keep my hands free frae the bluid o' mon. Mither expects it o' me.'

"'As sure as daith, it is Roderick,' said the mon at his side. 'Brither, brither, hoo could you do sic a thing?'

"'Gilbert, is it you? Dinna tell it,' an' he

said nae mair, but ran wi' speed into the wood hard by. Gilbert couldna find him for a' his searching. Sae he kenned that his brither was a highwaymon, an' not far frae his ain hame. He hoped that Roderick wasna a murderer, that some influence o' his mither wad keep him frae goin' that length. Puir Gilbert, what could he do? He daredna tell his parents the truth, an' the secret drove him amaist daft. He strove mair than ever to be a gude son; but he knew that the auld folk wearied for a sight of their firstborn.

" 'If he wad but come hame,' said the mither, 'I could forgive him ony sins save twa.'

" Gilbert weel kenned that one o' these sins was touchin' the life o' a fellow mortal. He wasna quite sure o' the ither, but as he leuked around on his fair, virtuous sisters he settled the matter in his ain mind.

" It was late in life before Gilbert merried, for he said, 'Suppose I should become parent to sic a son as Roderick.' But his faither said, 'Wull you let your family dee oot, Gilbert?' Sae he took a wife, an' but ane son was born o' that union. Gilbert aye bided wi' his faither. Twa o' his sisters, Katherine an' Margaret, were merried, but Agnes bided at hame. A great fear was upon Gilbert until he kenned that his son was good an' dutifu'.

"A' hope o' the return o' Roderick had died oot in the hearts o' the auld faither an' mither. They were waitin' in the gloamin' o' a winter evening for the candles to be brought when Gilbert entered an' said, 'Faither, mither, can you bear strange news the night?'

" 'Is it gude or bad news?' they asked.

" 'It is baith gude an' bad,' he answered. 'Roderick is but noo come hame, an' he is a dyin' mon.'

" 'God help us!' said they as they went to meet Roderick.

" His voice was tremulous an' a muckle tear stood in each e'e as he said, 'Mither I hae come hame to dee.'

" Weel, I canna tell you hoo affectin' it was, but the buik says that they a' lifted up their voices an' wept together. Roderick had said truly that he had come hame to dee, but he was penitent. Mony a confession he poured out before God; sometimes it seemed that he confessed his sins to the vera walls. He tauld his mither that her teachin' had kept him frae ane great sin, but he couldna bring himsel' to tell her that he had amaist spilled his ain brither's bluid. He died lamentin' his sins an' his waywardness. His parents soon followed him, an' as they passed over they baith were enabled to bear witness to

the depth o' peace that God gi'es to them wha trust in him. As they were aboot to step oot on the untried road that daith opens they said, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of daith, I wull fear no evil, for thou art wi' me; thy rod an' thy staff, they comfort me.'

"Weel, after the auld folk died Gilbert's family seemed small. His expenses were light an' siller was plenty. If he had been a mon like his brither, he wad hae gloated over a' the shinin' gowd that passed through his hands, but he wasna. He kenned weel that there are other riches than this warld offers an' mair endurin', ye ken. Besides he thought o' his mither an' o' her expectations o' him. 'Mither expects me to use this warld as na abusin' it, an' to live sae that I may meet her in heaven,' he wad say. This was a strang leadin' line in the right direction, an' kept him oot o' temptation. Ay, I maun say that when I read that I thought it wad be weel for us to remember that oor friends wha hae passed over are hopin' an' expectin' that we wull do oor best in the warld to mak' oor calling an' election sure.

"Weel, it wad be hard to tell hoo muckle gude this Gilbert did. Hoo mony puir he clad, hoo mony empty meal-pocks he filled, hoo mony comfortin' wards he spake, an' hoo mony blessin's fol-

lowed him couldna be estimated. His life just flowed on an' on like a smooth-rinnin' river till it emptied into the ocean o' eternity. Nane dooted that a gude mon had passed awa', an' mony a hearthstane bare witness that he was missed. The walls o' his hame seemed to be the witnesses to the wards written aboon his heid as he lay quiet in daith, 'So He giveth His beloved sleep.'

"His widow mourned in her laneliness. His sister Agnes felt that her hame was hame nae langer; but she had kenned nae ither, sae she bided there till her nephew Gilbert brought hame a gay wife wi' strange ways, then she went to bide wi' her sisters.

"Frae the merriage o' Gilbert sprang a large family, an' the walls o' the castle heard mair laughter an' mair discord, mair sangs an' mair curses, mair frolic an' mair dourness, than ever before. The mither wasna frae common folk, an' this wad seem mair promisin' for her family. Still, simple-minded folk often manage their bairns in a mair praiseworthy manner; an', after a', it depends whether the parents seek help frae the Faither o' us a' whether the bairns do good or ill. Gilbert's wife was destitute o' the ane thing needfu'; the fear o' the Lord wasna before her e'en. Her heart was taken up wi' the pleasures o' this warld an' the deceitfulness o' riches. She

gave little thought to her bairns, an' they gave little heed to her, an' that was why they were sic an unsteady family. Gilbert wasna like his father before him, or he wad hae putten doon the thoughtless youngsters o' his an' made them mair tentie-like. But that isna a'; the bairns scattered the siller forbye, but their puir auld grandmither didna live to see it. Puir soul, she wadna hae had muckle pleasure wi' sic grandchildren, wi' their clavers an' their havers, let alane the scatterin' o' their warldly goods an' the desecration o' the Sabbath an' sic like. It was tae muckle for Gilbert; he groaned wi' the disappointment; but his wife was the rulin' spirit, you see.

“Weel, to make a lang story short, those chiels o' his just made trouble enough wi' bad debts an' bad, idle habits, an' the faither bowed under it an' gave up. He was taken wi' a bad cold. There was nae ane to leuk after him, an' he had nae heart to leuk after himsel'. He slipped awa' oot o' the din an' strife aboot him into the ither warld. An' upon the walls o' the hoose was written his confession, ‘I hae failed in ilka thing; wae is me!’

“Then the eldest son, named Cuthbert, took matters in his ain hands. Noo it is easy to see that he couldna set matters straight at ance, even if he had been baith wise an' gude; but he was

neither: `The property was soon a' under debt, an' he an' his mither quarrelled the haill time. The other sons, one after another, gaed oot in the warld, but nae gude gaed wi' them.

“Weel, things gaed on frae bad to warse wi' the mither and Cuthbert, till ane day, when wards o' strife ran high, the mither was in a rage an' the son grew desperate. He spoke these words: ‘I wull mak' an end o' mysel’,’ an' he hurried to his room an' stabbed himsel'. His heart's bluid spurted oot upon the flure an' left its ane testimony. The mither got such a shock that she fell doon dead beside her son. The creditors came an' claimed their ain, an' naebody wad dwell in the hoose because o' the suicide o' Gilbert. Folk said that sounds came oot o' the walls, an' that the bluid-stains wadna wash oot o' them; that Cuthbert the first an' the twa Gilberts wad come an' wring their han's an' mak' loud an' lang lamentation owre the ruin o' the family.

“But I hae nae patience wi' sic-like tales; I canna abide them. The haill story was gotten up by Roger's imagination,” Elspeth explained to her excited hearers. Then she added, “Roger was asked why he didna gi'e the last Gilbert a gude wife, and then a' wad hae been weel; but he said, ‘Folk arena particular enough to choose gude wives. There's mony a mon wha mak's as puir

a choice as Gilbert did.' Then he was asked why he gave ony o' the Stewarts a gude character sin' he gave the story sic a bad ending, an' he answered, 'To show that ilka mon maun think an' act for himsel'; that he cannot win through the warld on the merits o' his faithers.' Weel, that is sae; we maun a' build oor ane characters, you ken."

"Ay, that is sae, that is sae," said Jean and Nelly in a breath.

"Noo," said Elspeth, "I haena tauld you the story as the buik was writ. I haena the language to tell it weel, but you hae an inkling o' it."

"An' vera glad we are that you hae tauld us," responded the Hughs sisters. After a moment's silence Jean asked, "Isna young Ainslie to tak' a wife to himsel' soon?"

"I expect he wull; leastways it leuks vera like it noo. I think that Edith Grant wullna be like Gilbert's wife."

Within a year's time Roger's marriage to Edith had taken place. Elspeth's comment was, "Weel, baith the Ainslie bairns are weel merried."

CHAPTER XX.

THE MOTHERLESS BAIRNS.

WHEN Aleck Fisher had been living three years in old Stephen's cottage he had the misfortune to lose his wife. Mrs. Ainslie's heart was filled with sympathy for the motherless children, and she sent for them to come to the castle, when she showered comforts upon them with a lavish hand.

No one seeing the four lads bowed with sorrow would have thought it possible that they were the same merry little urchins that had so often attracted the attention of Sir William with their rough, boisterous play. "The red head, the black head, the muckle head, and the white head," all were uncovered in the presence of Mrs. Ainslie. Her unlooked-for kindness made them thoughtful and gentle, while it partly softened their sorrow and filled the blank that death had made.

Elsbeth watched her young mistress with evident satisfaction and admiration, and she asked, "My dear leddy, are you goin' to mither a' those bairns?"

"For the present, at least," Mrs. Ainslie answered.

"It beats a'," answered Elspeth, and ventured no further remark.

Mr. Ainslie was sure that his wife possessed rare traits of goodness and benevolence. Sir William feelingly said, "Marion, daughter, you grow mair an' mair like her wha bore you. I thought that you hadna her sweetness, but it blossoms oot every year. You are liker her than I ever dared to hope. I see that you ripen fast in faith an' gude warks; God grant that you mayna be as early called to your reward. She went to her rest at five an' thirty. That was mony years ago, an' hoo mony o' those years I hae groped in the darkness an' blindness o' sin." After a moment's hesitation he continued, "Perhaps, after a', Marion, I am sadder for the trouble I gave you aboot matrimony than onything else. Thank God that the answer you gave Dalziel saved you frae a blighted life, for I weel believe that he is a doon-right scoundrel. Even then I hadna muckle faith in his morality, but I looked at the gowd an' the siller; I looked at the gowd an' the siller. It gars me tak' shame to mysel' to own it noo, an' I thought you were disobedient an' undutifu', puir mitherless lassie that you were."

"Dinna blame yoursel' ony mair, faither; I am a happy woman, as you see. I hae a' that heart can wish for, an' it amaist frightens me

when I think o' the gude that falls to my lot. Perhaps you can understand the pleasure it gives me to comfort the Fisher laddies. Oot o' my abundance I wad fain drop crumbs to the empty."

"Ay, I understand your mind weel enough to ken that, Marion. I suppose that you hae often thought o' what I hae been thinkin' o' late, hoo far aboon a' human example o' disinterested benevolence stands the divine example o' oor sufferin' Saviour. Reach oot as we may, forget oor sel's as much as possible, there is naething that we can do for oor fellow-mortals that is worthy to stand in the shadow o' his ane great act o' love."

"Naething," answered Mrs. Ainslie; "an' yet there is nae reason why we shouldna do a' that we can, even though we do fa' sae short o' the divine pattern. An' there are mony acts o' oor dear Lord that we may mair nearly imitate."

"Ay, we can visit the sick an' gang aboot doing gude, though even in that we canna give the comfort that he gave. I hae often thought o' the time the Maister girded himsel' wi' a towel an' washed his disciples' feet in that upper chamber. I think it was that vera act o' his that gave me hope. For you ken that God stands sae far aboon us that we darena think to approach him; an' oor Saviour, too, in his life on earth, was sae unique, sae grandly gude an' blameless, that I

couldna seem to win to him. But amang his followers he became as ane o' them; he took the place o' a servant amang them; sae I said to mysel', 'This is reachin' doon even to me; here is a hand held oot, here is ane wha wunna scorn to wash my heart, bad as it is, sin' he washed the feet o' sinfu' men.'

"I see," said Mrs. Ainslie; "we a' want to see the human side o' oor Saviour to give us courage to hope in his mercy, for then we realize that he understands us an' feels for us an' wi' us. We feel that he is indeed oor Elder Brither an' that we are acquaint wi' him.'

"Ay, acquaint wi' him; I like that. 'Then aboot his bein' a Brither an' stickin' closer than a brither. Ane wha had a gude, thoughtfu' brither as I had can understand that. My brither died when I needed him maist; but this Brither ever liveth to mak' intercession for us. The Buik may weel say that 'he sticketh closer than a brither.'"

Mrs. Ainslie wept tears of joy to know that her father was thus "growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Nothing more was said, and Sir William turned and looked out of the window. Soon he said, as if speaking his thoughts, "Puir wee mon!"

"What is it, faither?"

"The wee white-headed lad has been over to

the auld cot, an' is comin' awa' greetin' oot-right."

"Puir wee heart!" answered Mrs. Ainslie, "I maun awa' to try an' comfort him."

When she met him she said, "Dinna greet, Geordie, dinna. I ken that you miss your mither, an' I wull try to be a mither to you; I wull see that you want for naething. Your mither is in heaven, Geordie, an' she is sae happy that you shouldna wish her here again."

The little fellow shook his head doubtfully, and answered, "Nae, I saw her put in the ground."

Mrs. Ainslie took the child to a seat, put her arm around him, and said, "Geordie, before your mither died, when you said, 'Mither,' she heard you, knew you, an' thought about you—"

"Ay, she did that," interrupted the child.

"But after she died she could not see you, she could not hear you, she did not know you—" and in the pause while Mrs. Ainslie was thinking what to say next Geordie said, "I ken she didna, for I couldna wake her, an' it was sae strange."

"Nae, not strange, for she was dead. The soul, the part that loved you an' smiled on you through her e'en an' answered your call, had gone oot o' her body, an' sae there was naething left to answer, Geordie. The thinking, loving part has

gone to heaven. She doesna know that her body is in the grave; leastways she doesna feel the ground upon her, an' naething frets her; sae cheer up, my wee mon, an' be as happy as you can. Some time, if you are gude, you shall gang to your mither. Come awa' wi' me an' see what I can find for a gude little lad."

Geordie wiped his eyes and trudged along beside Mrs. Ainslie, hoping that she would find sugar-plums; nor was he disappointed. When he was again with his brothers he tried to explain what Mrs. Ainslie had told him.

"I kenned a' that," Sandy quickly replied; "but it is bad enough, after a', that we maun be left mitherless. I doot if mither wadna rather hae stayed wi' us."

"I ken weel she wad," said Rab. "Weel, she couldna, or she wad; an' I ken that Mistress Ainslie is vera gude to tak' us to her bonnie hame."

"Sae she is," said Sandy, "an' I mean to love her weel."

"Sae do I," chimed in the other three.

"Elspeth is gude, tae; but she aye says, 'Be quiet, lads, be quiet, lads.' Dear kens, we are quiet enough now-a-days," said Rab.

"That is true," answered Tam. "If she had us by her fire, as we were when mither was alive,

she might weel say, 'Be quiet, lads, be quiet, lads.' "

Rab's dark eyes filled with tears as he said, "Mither was gude, an' I doot if we are ever sae happy again."

"She was that gude that she wad amaist lee for us," said Tam.

"Hoots! Dinna speak like that, an' her awa'! She was gude, an' that is enough to say."

"Of coorse, of coorse," meekly answered the other, feeling the propriety of his brother's reprimand.

This conversation was interrupted by Elspeth's call, "Come, noo, an' tak' your supper, lads."

"I wush that the lads wadna wear sic sad faces," said Sir William to Mr. Ainslie as they stood together watching the children. "I tell them to gang an' play by themsel's, but they fling themsel's doon on the grass, an' the next thing I see is ane o' them wipin' his e'en upon his sleeve. I didna think that the rough lads had sae muckle heart."

"You canna always tell wha is sensitive. A tender heart is often hidden under the coarse jacket o' a noisy lad. I like them the better that they grieve a bit. If they could sae soon forget their puir mither wha made sic a slave o' hersel' for them, because they are weel housed an' weel

fed, I wad think them destitute o' natural affection. They wull laugh an' play again, give them time, faither."

"Weel, weel, be it sae. But I miss their wee games as I sit idly by the window. I haena muckle change, you see, an' their play minds me o' the time when I was a lad an' played wi' my brither on the same spot. Baith o' us had a wee doggie; weel, as to that, what ane had the ither had. Puir Tam, puir brither Tam! I believe I like the lad wi' the muckle heid best because o' his name. Graham wants ane o' them; he canna hae Tam. I think that Sandy better gang, an' that wull leave the three younger anes here wi' their faither. Aleck is vera gratefu' that we take sae muckle care o' the bairns, an' he wunna object to Sandy's goin' to Graham's. Marjorie an' baith the auld lassies wull pet an' cuddle him."

Aleck was consulted, and Sandy went to Walker's, nothing loath, since he could see his father and his brothers as often as he pleased.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH OF JEAN HUGHS.

AGAIN the snows of Scotland lay upon her mountains, her hillsides, and her moorlands, and her streams were locked in the embrace of winter.

It was one bitterly cold night that Elspeth was wrapping herself in a heavy cloak. "I wish that you didna need to go, gude Elspeth; the night is fearsome," said Mrs. Ainslie.

"You may weel say that it is fearsome," said Sir William, drawing nearer to the blazing fire.

"I ken that; but Jean is waur the nicht, an' Nelly is amaist worn oot wi' watching. There is a mon wi' a conveyance waitin' at the gate, sae I dinna think that I shall suffer cauld."

"Weel, that wull do; I thought if you were goin' to foot it there, we wad hae a sick woman here, an' perhaps a dead ane," answered Sir William.

"Na sae bad as that, I hope. I maunna be sae afraid o' the cauld. Gude nicht to you a'."

In a short time Elspeth was left at the door of the farmhouse. Nelly met her, saying, "Dear, gude Elspeth, I am sae glad you hae come. I

thought you wad come, though the nicht is sae terrible."

Without making any reply Elspeth asked, "Hoo is she noo?"

"She isna ony better. I fear that she isna through the warst o' it."

Elspeth followed Nelly to the bedside of her suffering sister, and as soon as she saw Jean she turned to Nelly with a startled look on her face. The look was understood, and the poor frightened woman put out her hand, saying, "Dinna, dinna tell me that she wull dee."

But even while she was speaking a stony look came into the eyes of Jean, and Elspeth said, "I maun ca' Mistress Walker."

She went to Marjorie, and said, "Whatever shall we do? Jean canna live till morn, an' Nelly wunna hear ane ward. Come awa' an' speak wi' her."

"Oh, I canna tell her, Elspeth. Are you na mistaken? She wullna dee, wull she?"

"Come awa' an' see for yoursel'. I wad hope, an' I could, that I am mistaken."

Elspeth and Marjorie went back to the sick-room. It was hard to tell whose face was the whiter, Nelly's or Jean's. Neither sister looked up when Elspeth and Marjorie entered; for one was fast losing consciousness because life itself

was going out, and the other was conscious of but one thing, and that she was fighting against with all the strength of her nature. Nelly had always walked contentedly in the shadow of her sister. Jean was the elder, and she had first secured the place of service at Felix Cameron's, and then she had procured a place for her sister. They had seen long, dark years of thankless service, but they had endured them because they were together. When frowns were blackest upon the face of their old master, then they had a smile for each other. Forty years of faithful service had they rendered side by side. Jean had been there three years when Mrs. Cameron died. Her services were appreciated by her mistress, and on her death-bed she asked her to remain and care for her little daughter, Graham's dead mother.

When we walk a long distance on life's pathway in one direction we come to think it will never change. So poor Nelly found it when the certainty of Jean's death forced itself upon her mind; she was spellbound, and only shook herself free when Marjorie asked in a frightened voice, "Wull she dee, tae?"

"Naebody wull dee," Nelly roused herself to say.

"Alack! she is already awa', Nelly," said Elspeth. "Noo be calm. Nae greetin', nae

mournin', nae rebellious feelin's can bring her back, puir lass. Sae gi'e in, gi'e in to a wisdom higher than your ain, an' say wi' true submission, 'The Lord's wull be done.' If you canna say it noo, pray for grace that you may be enabled to speak the wards sae becomin' to a Christian heart."

"I canna, I canna; it is sae sudden, saem ournful, that I canna stand it," she said, bursting into tears.

Elsbeth gave Marjorie a look which said, "She wull stand it noo."

And she did bear up very well under her burden of sorrow. Elsbeth and Marjorie did not fail to ask help for her from above.

The next morning the cold had abated and the sun was shining upon the white fields. Elsbeth felt that all was not so sad even in winter and with death so near.

When she reached the castle she told the news by saying simply, "She is awa', Jean is awa'."

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed Sir William. Then he added, "Weel, she has but answered the call that maun come to a'. I doot if Nelly stays lang ahint her, she was that bound up in Jean. Hoo strange it wull be to see her at the kirk an' her sister na wi' her."

Mrs. Ainslie replied, "Ay, it wull seem strange. The affection they showed for each other was beautiful, I think."

"They were a' the world to each ither. If Jean had died when auld Felix was maister doon there, Nelly wad hae pined awa', but wi' Marjorie she wunna," said Elspeth.

"That is sae. Marjorie wull cheer her if onybody can. She is gude an' cheerfu' an' wise. She is fit to be the companion o' ony leddy in the lan', an' yet she doesna feel aboon ony decent person she meets wi'," said Sir William.

"You wull be needed to help make ready for the funeral," said Mrs. Ainslie.

"Ay, I was goin' to ask you if I could gang doon this afternoon. The funeral wull be at the kirk, an' there isna muckle to be done, but I ken weel I can make mysel' useful; besides, Nelly begged me to come back," answered Elspeth.

The evening after the funeral Elspeth sat with little Annie in her lap and Kenneth standing by her knee. Finally she said, "I hae been thinkin' that daith calls auld folk oot o' the world aboot as fast as the young are born into it. Twa are lately gone frae oor neighborhood. Wha wull be the next the gude Lord alane kens. May we a' be ready, an' it wunna matter vera muckle wha it is. Heaven is oor hame, onyway.

We are but pilgrims an' sojourners here, as oor faithers were before us."

She said no more, but looked down tenderly upon the children she fondled. She had a good, motherly feeling for the little Fisher lads, but for Kenneth and Annie, heirs of the house of Campbell, she felt something akin to devotion. She saw that the "mitherless bairns" were well helped to parritch, which food she recommended for them. If she did not help them with her own hand, she would say to the serving-maid, "Give them plenty, give the bairns plenty," but her attentions to the children of her "leddy" were more delicate and constant. She knitted the softest of lamb's wool stockings for their "wee feet," and mittens for Kenneth's hands. When he went to play out of doors in cold weather, she called him to her and saw that he was "weel bundled."

The children added much interest to the home-life within the castle. The older inmates grew older without realizing it, and Mr. and Mrs. Ainslie fast developed in mind and heart because of their parental love and duties, and in Christian charity because they opened their hearts as well as their home to the little ones who needed their care.

CHAPTER XXII.

RETRIBUTION.

A FEW years sped on. Sir William was becoming quite infirm and he was glad that he had such a son-in-law as Ainslie proved to be, for he was one whom he could trust and on whom he could lean. "He is a great hame-body," Sir William would say, and the fact pleased him. One day a letter bearing the London postmark came to Ainslie.

"Dootless it is frae my uncle, for I dinna ken ony one else wha wad write to me frae London," said he as he broke the seal. He read it through; then he said, "It is frae my uncle's lawyer. My uncle is dead. I maun gang to London, Marion; there is property left to me, an' I maun attend to the matter in person."

Mr. Ainslie set out for London at once. It was in the early springtime and the work on the farm had not really commenced, and Aleck Fisher declared himself competent to stand at the head of affairs. He said to Mr. Ainslie, "I wull keep ilka thing in order. A' wull gang as straight as if you were here yoursel'."

"I can trust you, Aleck," replied Mr. Ainslie.

These words gave Aleck much pleasure, for he felt that he was trusted as Stephen Watson had been, and he had heard a great deal about Stephen's faithfulness. The first day that Mr. Ainslie was away Aleck went briskly from one duty to another, bent upon doing his best. He could not refrain from planning for his master, although he would not venture to suggest anything to him. He was in the stable currying Rory, and he said to himself, "This beastie is lang past his prime. He does nothing but eat, an' a' that he eats maun be o' the vera best. I wad soon sell him, gin I were the maister. An' the blacks arena sic as the maister nicht own. Nae doot they hae been gude in their day, for they are weel built." Looking at their teeth, he said, "Ay, they hae seen a score o' years, I'se warrant."

It was not surprising that Aleck reasoned thus, for the castle farm yielded excellent harvests and money was plenty. But he did not know the history of Rory and the blacks, that they had been sold, and redeemed by Mr. Ainslie and given to his wife. In the evening Aleck ventured to speak his mind to Elspeth as he piled up the wood for the kitchen fire. He supposed that she would think him a shrewd calculator; but she was much displeased and replied very tartly,

“’Deed, an’ Rory wull be keepit here as lang as he lives, though he should hae nae teeth to grind his food an’ I should hae to make messes over the fire for him an’ feed him wi’ a spoon. An’ as for the blacks, you wull hae to let them bide their time as weel. Though you dinna ken it, there are reasons why nane o’ them wull be parted wi’, reasons that ilka new-comer needna ken.”

“Weel, weel,” replied Aleck, somewhat offended, “you may keep your reasons. I doot I can serve my maister withoot kennin’ a’ his business; but you needna be sae curt, Mistress Lundie.”

Elsbeth thought for a minute, then she said, “I needna, that’s a fac’.” And Aleck, not willing to be outdone in generosity, made the concession, “It is nae matter, nae matter at a’. Wull that be wood enough, think you?”

“I should judge sae,” she replied good-naturedly, and the ill-feeling went no farther.

When Mrs. Ainslie received the first letter from her husband she was disappointed, for he wrote that he would be obliged to remain in London for several weeks. He gave directions concerning the work that could not be deferred until his return.

Sir William missed Mr. Ainslie every day,

and he often said, "I long to see Roger hame again."

He could say nothing that would give his daughter more pleasure than this. When Ainslie did come he was the first to see him, being on the watch for him. He got up with considerable difficulty and went to meet him.

Mr. Ainslie was very glad and thankful that he was at home again, but he seemed very thoughtful, and Sir William asked, "Haena your business affairs gone weel, Roger?"

"Ay, but I hae met wi' some ane that I wish I hadna seen, leastways not in the condition that I found him."

"It wasna Dalziel?"

"Ay, it was; but hoo came you to think o' him?"

"I dinna ken; but the meenit you spoke I thought o' him. Hoo did you find him? Tell me, for I hae a wish to know."

"I found him a beggar in the streets o' London."

"You dinna tell me sae! Marion, did you hear that?"

Mrs. Ainslie bowed assent, but made no other answer.

"Tell us a' aboot him, Ainslie."

"I was passing through ane o' the quiet streets

ane day when my attention was attracted to a group o' three persons. An auld mon, or ane wha had the appearance o' age, was beggin' o' a man an' a boy. The man paid no heed to the beggar, save that he glowered fiercely at him, an' he wad hae passed on; but the lad pit his han' in his pocket as if to gi'e him a bit, when his companion said, 'Not to him, Tommy, not to him.' I stood still, for it seemed that I maun, an' the twa passed on. Then the beggar turned to me an' said, 'Hae you na a shilling to gi'e to a mon in distress?'

"Weel, I gave him the shilling, an' as I leuked in his face I said, 'Why, Dalziel, is this you?'

" 'Ay, is it, Ainslie,' he replied; 'I am a beggar in the streets, but I wullna be here lang. I wull soon be dead an' lost. But hoo came it that you werena drowned? I thought you were dead.'

" 'I was mercifully saved,' I replied.

" 'I used to think that I was mercifully saved frae drownin', an' by your ain hand. But I think it wad hae been better for me gin I had slipped oot o' the world then an' there.'

"I was silent, for what could I say, an' he went on: 'I hae but noo met wi' folk wha minded me o' my sins. There they gang noo,' an' he pointed to the couple that had just left him. 'Leuk at the lad; does he na leuk like me?'

"I leuked, an' then I said, 'If he had black e'en he wad leuk enough like you to be your ain son.'

"'He is my son, but I dinna think that he kens it. I saw the leuk o' his mither, an' o' mysel' too, for that matter; besides, I knew the mon that he was wi'. I asked for a few pence, an' the lad wad hae gi'en them, but the mon wouldna let him.'"

Then Dalziel told the story of Gentle Annie and her wrongs. When he had finished, he said, "I wush I hadna seen the lad; he minds me o' things that I wad like to forget."

"Weel," continued Mr. Ainslie, "I wad do nae gude to blame him, an' I said, 'I am sorry that you hae done sic a great wrang. God forgi'e you.' Then I asked, 'Hoo is it that you are oot o' siller?'"

"'I am like the prodigal son that the Buik tells o'; I hae wasted my substance in riotous livin'.'

"Weel, I felt a minglin' o' pity, blame, an' sorrow; an' he said, 'Ainslie, dinna leuk sae; I amna warth a pityin' leuk frae a decent mon.'

"'What can I do for you?' I asked.

"'Naething, unless you can gi'e me a couple o' pounds to haud me together for a wee while, for Satan wull soon claim his ain.' Then he add-

ed, 'If ever you gang to Craggsby Castle you can tell the folk that they are weel off that they had nae mair to do wi' me. That minds me o' somat I had clean forgotten: I left your brither's bairns there. I didna want to bother wi' them, an' I didna want to see them suffer, an' I thought that Leddy Marion was befriended them.'

"I said naething in reply except that I had found the bairns. I couldna bear to hear him speak o' you, Marion, even to praise you, nor could I say aught o' oor happiness here. Whether it was because I despised him tae muckle to talk wi' him, or whether I thought that he wad feel his ain miserable condition mair by the contrast, I couldna tell, nor can I tell yet."

Mr. Ainslie ceased speaking. Both Sir William and his daughter had listened intently, but only Sir William spoke.

"Marion," said he, "I said lang ago, touchin' ane important decision, that if you didna heed my wushes you wad repent it. But I ken to-night, better than I ever kenned before, that you will never repent o' that answer, nor will I."

"Faither," replied Mrs. Ainslie, "surely you hae made enough acknowledgment aboot that unhappy affair; noo let it never be mentioned again between us."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A TALK IN THE GLOAMING.

As summer advanced Mrs. Ainslie noticed that her father seldom went outside of the castle. He lost his interest in the sports of "the laddies" and often seemed to be engaged in serious thought. One evening when he sat thus pensive Mrs. Ainslie asked, "Faither, you do not feel sad, do you?"

"Nae, not exactly sad, but I am nearin' the dure o' the shadowy passageway, an' I was wonderin' if it is so shadowy after a'. I was leukin' oot into the shades o' night when the moon suddenly glinted oot an' dispelled them; an' there may be something to dispel the shadows o' the night o' death. What think you, Marion?"

"I think that there is no terror in the daith o' the righteous. I haena thought muckle aboot daith; I suppose it is because I am still young an' hae sae muckle to live for."

"It maun be that. When I was your age I didna gi'e it ane thought; but that time seems lang sin'. Marion, when ane in castin' a backward glance on his life admits that it leuks lang, you may set it doon that he is unhappy, an' that

is what I hae been. I hae had mair enjoyment in the wee time that I hae tried to be an honest mon than in the haill o' my life before. I say an honest mon, for I haud to it that nae mon is honest when he defrauds his Maker an' Preserver o' the homage due to him, to say naething o' the greater debt we owe for oor purchased salvation."

Elsbeth sent up the light, but Sir William turned to the maid and said, "We dinna want lights noo."

Then resuming his conversation with his daughter, he said, "I like this hour better than any ither noo. It canna be tae lang for me, but ance I couldna bear it. Hoo we are changed when ance the grace o' God gets into oor hearts! The gloamin' aye seems to bid me think, an' that is what I didna like; but sin' I hae been able to pray David's prayer, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,' I haena been afraid to be alane wi' my thoughts. My! but it is a different thing to be at peace wi' God than na to be, to hae his smile than to hae his frown. My heart seems to be clean made over; it is as saft as a bairn's. Not that I am growin' childish in the way folk use the ward, but I mak' bauld to hope that I am becomin' mair like oor Saviour

said we maun be—like little children, you mind. Weel, I wad like to be as guileless as when I was a bairn. I wad like to be as trustful, when I leuk up with the eye o' faith as I was when a wee lad I leuked up in my mither's face. Marion, I had a gude mither; I doot I iver tauld you muckle about her."

"I ken vera little about her; I wad like you to tell me mair."

"I wull tell you what I can recall. Some things wull gi'e us baith pleasure, but a' isna pleasant that presents itsel' to my memory, for my mither had a sad, hard life o' it. Yet I ken, for I had it frae hersel', that her troubles drove her nearer to the invisible but never-failin' Friend. I canna tell you when my first recollections o' mither began, but it was when I was small enough to sit in her lap an' pillow my heid on her mither-heart, as your wee Annie is doin' noo. Weel, before I gang farther, I wad say that this is ane way in which I feel like a bairn. It seems that I am lying in the lap o' God's providence an' my weary heid is resting on the great heart o' oor universal Faither.

"Weel, to go on about your grandmither, if you should ask me hoo she looked, I wad say, bonnie; if you should ask me about her character, I wad say it was blameless. But that wunna sat-

isfy me ; it wadna satisfy ony ane wha feels that he wad like to talk aboot his mither, to ca' mony things frae the dusty past an' gi'e them into the keepin' o' anither. I hae aye wushed you to be like your mither ; that is why I wadna seem to set your grandmither afore her by speakin' muckle in her praise. Nor hae I changed my mind in this respect. Your gude, gentle mither wad hae been better prepared to meet life's battles if she had possessed mair o' your grandmither's firmness. Nae doot I wad hae been a better mon if mither had lived langer. I had a vera bad example set afore me ; you can guess by whom ; an' after he wha set it had been removed my mither had great hopes o' winnin' me owre to the right. Mony, ay, constant, were her efforts to uproot the evil habits I had formed ; but a' the while disease was preyin' upon her, an' naebody kenned it but hersel' an' God, who for some wise but inscrutable purpose sent the affliction. I canna dwell upon that trouble ; the sudden revelation to us puir lads, my brither an' mysel', was amaist overpowering. Puir Tam cried, 'What wull life be warth withoot mither?' an' I had the same thought, but I didna say it, for I wasna as ootspoken as Tam. Weel, she soon passed frae us, an' then we kenned the desolate feelin' that orphanage brings. I wad sit whiles by mysel' an'

imagine that she was wi' us again. I could amaist see her pleasant face an' hear her cheerfu' voice, an' fancy that I heard her quick, light step, for she was aye movin' aboot, aye busy. 'Leddy Grissel Campbell ate no idle bread,' that was what folk said aboot her.

"My mither was a Christian. What she believed to be wrang she wadna do; she could neither be coaxed nor driven to it. What she thought right she wadna be turned frae, though friends opposed an' she stood alane in her opinion. She was wont to say, 'I need but Ane on my side; let me ken that I hae Him, an' whaever is against us wull strive against fearfu' odds.' You mayna be able to understand hoo she wad need to oppose others sae muckle, an' I may as weel tell you that my faither was an unco unkind, unsteady husband. I was bad enough mysel', but not like him. He aye gathered the wrang kind o' people aboot him, an', as mither often tauld him, he fouled the atmosphere an' made us laddies familiar wi' shame an' sin. I mind o' seein' her carry hersel' wi' the majesty o' an indignant queen, for she believed that there is sic a thing as righteous indignation. I hae seen her clear the house mair than ance when the maister was too fu' o' wine to ken aught o' propriety. I hae heard my mither say, 'Nae mair wine the nicht,' an' not a servant wad stir a

foot for it though commanded by my faither himself'. I maunna say mair, for it calls up ane scene that I hae aye wushed to forget, but I canna. Eh! it is sae vivid before my e'en noo."

After a short pause Sir William went on, "I told you that she was aye busy, an' as I leuk back I think she maun hae been a veritable Dorcas. It is nae wonder that a' oor tenants loved her, an' we had mair tenants then than sin' I hae had the management. It was some distance to gang to the cottages, but ilka youngster kenned an' loved her. Weel they might, for many were the garments she took them year after year, mony o' them made wi' her ain hands. She an' her maids wad sit up o' nights when the cold weather was comin' on to sew for the poor. I might as weel say here that Jock Cargill is doon sick an' the family are in want. If my mither kenned aboot us, I fear that she wad think us very lax about oor people."

"I see noo, faither, why you talked o' your mither. It was to wake me up to my duty. Thank God that I do not have to contend wi' the evils that she had, but the paths to the cottages, so often trodden by her, maun grow mair familiar to me. We have not thought how oor own people live. I wull gang to-morrow to see Jock Cargill at least."

“That is richt, my bairn, gang. I feel that I hae been a slothfu’ man a’ these years, that I haena looked after my tenants. It is but lately that I hae thought muckle aboot it, an’ noo I am auld an’ feeble. Another thing, Marion, I am glad that you thank God because you haena the trouble that your grandmither had. You hae reason to thank him, great reason, Marion. I dinna doot but you hae the kindest an’ the best husband o’ ony leddy that ever lived within these castle walls.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

AMONG THE TENANTRY.

THE next morning Mrs. Ainslie, true to her promise, went to see Jock Cargill's family. She took little Kenneth with her. This she did to give him pleasure and also for the sake of his company, for he was a pleasant, talkative child, and very sensible withal.

The air was soft and balmy and the hills were clothed in the freshness and beauty of summer. Exclamations of delight were on Kenneth's lips as he watched the flight of the birds and listened to their songs or plucked the heatherbells and the sweet-brier roses. He was in excellent spirits when they reached the cottage, and Mrs. Ainslie herself was so charmed by the beauty of the morning that before she was aware of it she stood upon the doorstone. Then it occurred to her that her joy might be in striking contrast to the trouble of the cottagers; that where sickness and poverty were found gladness would be a stranger. She knew not that the feeling of peace and security was there.

Mrs. Ainslie's gentle knock was answered



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by a pleasant "Come in." She lifted the wooden latch, and as she entered, a sprightly little woman rose from her seat by the bedside and dropped a low curtsy. Then she said with some embarrassment, "'Deed, my leddy, had I kenned it was yoursel' I wadna hae received you sae. I wadna hae kept my seat an' bade you come in like common people. The neebors come an' gang, an' I thought for sure it was some o' them."

"Never mind, my gude woman," said Mrs. Ainslie. "How is your husband this morning?"

"He is mendin' noo, I mak' nae doot; but he has suffered muckle considerin' the short time he has been doon."

"I did not know till yestere'en that he was ailing."

"Did you na? Mr. Ainslie kenned it, an' on his way back frae the toon he left the gude mon a right lot o' nourishin' things; neither is it the first time he has been mindfu' o' oor comfort; may he never want for a friend. I maun think that the nourishin' things that he brought are settin' Jock up again; besides, it gave him a comfortable feelin' that Mr. Ainslie leuked in on him. A body aye picks up heart, you ken, when he finds that he isna clean set aside an' forgotten."

Jock Cargill awoke and turned his eyes upon Mrs. Ainslie. He spoke, saying, "Gude day,

Mrs. Ainslie. I take it as a vera great kindness that you come to see the likes o' us. An' there is the wee mon, too, leukin' as blithe as possible. Heard you the bit birds the morn? I trow you heard them doon by the wood yonder. I aye liked to wark doon by the wood, sae that I could hear the wee sangsters. My ears are gleg to hear the music o' the laverock to this day. Weel I canna win there noo, but my auld heart is fu' o' music. I wad fain mak' melody unto the Lord for a' his gudeness to me. Surely he verifies ilka promise to us. The last few days hae gi'en me proof o' this. I did fret a bit when I took my bed, for the siller was low. But I hae proven again that we are afflicted for oor gude. Sae near an' gracious has God been to me sin' I hae been sick that I feel that his presence mair than mak's up for my suffering an' loss."

"That was what he was sayin' to me the morn, an' I take it that he kens what he speaks o', he is that cheerfu'," said Mrs. Cargill.

"There is a blessing hidden underneath a' our afflictions if we patiently leuk for it," said Mrs. Ainslie.

"That is sae," returned the old man. "Hoo is Sir William, your faither?"

"Faither does not seem to be in good health, though he complains very little."

"I thought the last time that I saw him at the kirk that he was failin'. It is but naitral, Mrs. Ainslie, that he should. When a mon nears his threescore an' ten years he maun expect to feel the infirmities o' age. I am half a score o' years younger than Sir William, an' though I am still gude for a day's wark, I ken weel that I wunna be sae lang. Your faither wull gang weel; alloo me to rejoice a bit wi' you that this is sae. It was ane o' my happiest days when I saw Sir William partake o' the sacred bread an' wine."

Jock said no more just then, but his wife spoke, saying, "Ay, indeed it was a happy day to the gudemon, and weel it might be, sin' the maister's conversion seemed but the answer to his mony prayers."

Mrs. Ainslie was much affected on hearing this. She thought, "Here in one o' my faither's cottages is a man who has been praying for him; while we have given him scanty wages for his services, he has been laboring for the salvation of my faither's soul." She spoke with feeling. "I am very greatly obliged to you for your kind remembrance of my faither's greatest need. God grant that your ain life may be mair blessed through your faithfulness for others."

"Ay, it was faithfulness that I aimed at. I

had the gude o' my maister at heart, an' though I had no siller nor ony influence to help him in his straits, I said to mysel', Sir William has anither need, an' his help maun come frae Ane to whom I can speak. He is nae respecter o' persons, an' he wull hear puir Jock Cargill's prayer as soon as that o' the king on the throne. Sae I just betook mysel' to prayer, as the gudewife has said. But I needna be speakin' about it; it was but my bounden duty. I owed as muckle to his mither, for it was Leddy Grissel Campbell wha set me thinkin' o' my soul's welfare."

"Then you knew her?"

"Should I na ken ane wha gave me mony a gude bit of advice, and has putten mony a garment to my back forbye? It is true, I was but young, but impressions are made upon the minds o' wee bairns sooner than we think; for that reason we should mind what we say afore them. Your wee lad wull nae doot remember his first visit to auld Jock Cargill's, an' sin' this is likely, I wad fain say something to profit him; but what can I say except to repeat the wards o' Holy Writ, 'They that seek me early shall find me.'"

Mrs. Ainslie slipped a sovereign into the hand of Mrs. Cargill, and with the blessings of the pious

couple upon her head she left them. She took her way down to the other cottage where lived James Moray and his wife. There was no sickness in that cottage. The door stood open, and as the shadow of the visitors fell athwart the threshold Mrs. Moray left her spinning and came forward to welcome her guests. Mrs. Ainslie was surprised to find that she possessed a refinement not common to cotters' wives. After spending a half-hour with her, during which time she learned many of the hopes and plans of the young couple, she went back to the castle. She felt that she had long robbed herself of one source of pleasure by not visiting the poor in her neighborhood.

As for the families she had visited, they felt like joining in the opinion of Aleck Fisher and his lads, who thought Mrs. Ainslie was the nicest and the best lady in the world.

When Mrs. Ainslie had an opportunity to talk over the matter with her husband she asked him why he had not told her of Jock Cargill's illness and his visits to him. He replied, "I did not tell you that he was ill, for I thought that your sympathies were sufficiently called out towards the Fisher laddies. I did not tell you of my attempts to help them, because we are told that we maunna let our left hand know what our right hand

doeth, although I maun say I do not count you my left hand, Marion."

Then followed a long talk, in which Sir William joined, and it resulted in a more settled conviction that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and in a plan for a systematic care for the benefit of the poorer folk around them.

CHAPTER XXV.

ELSPETH'S SURPRISE.

"WHAT have we here?" said Mr. Ainslie as he untied a package that had been left by the carrier. "Books, are they? Ay, they are, and written by Roger. The title is 'Well-Remembered Tales.'"

There were several copies of the book, and the different members of the family were soon busied in looking at them. Sir William put on his spectacles, and glancing over one of the volumes came upon the name Jamie Geddes. "Jamie Geddes," he repeated; "Elsbeth, is he na in ane o' your stories?"

"Ay; it is queer that Roger took that name."

"He has taken the whole story," said Mrs. Ainslie.

Elsbeth opened her eyes wide at this. In a few minutes Mrs. Ainslie spoke again. "Elsbeth, Roger has put all your stories in the book."

Elsbeth seized the book and looked at it a few minutes, then she exclaimed, "As sure as daith, I believe he has putten doon every story that he an' Marjorie ever coaxed frae me!" She count-

ed the chapters and went on, "I didna think that I had tauld sae mony. Weel, I am surprised; wha wad hae thought it! I didna think that he counted it warth his while to give ony heed to them."

On the fly-leaf of one book was written, "To Mistress Elspeth Lundie, to whom I am indebted for the subject matter of this volume."

A few days later Elspeth was reading in her much-cherished treasure. She sighed heavily and said to Mrs. Ainslie, "Here is ane story that I hae never tauld him, an' hoo he came to it I canna make oot."

"What is it aboot, Elspeth?" asked Mrs. Ainslie.

"It is my ain sad story, an' it is sadder here than I could hae tauld it, though Roger's wards dinna come up to the fu' measure o' sufferin' it gave me. Ay, ay, it is the same. I ken it, though he has given Robin an' mysel' different names. Oh, I ken hoo he came to it! I tauld Marjorie, an' she maun hae tauld her brither."

Marjorie was anxious to talk over the new book with the family at the castle, and she came over with Graham and Roger, their little son, to spend the evening. This visit was such as is often enjoyed among intimate friends. Incidents of the past were rehearsed, the present was discussed,

and the future looked into with cheerfulness. Of course the young author's name was often upon their lips. Marjorie and the others were much amused when Mr. Ainslie recalled many things concerning Roger's childhood. Sir William spoke of his faithfulness during the years that he had lived at the castle, and he added, "Albeit, faithfu' as he was with his wark, I came to the conclusion that he shouldna be kept at the plough's tail."

Elspeth had her own words of praise, and they were these: "An' I too kenned that faithfu' as he was, his heart was wi' his buiks. Evenings before the candles were brought 'in, when he could nae longer get light enough at the western window, he wad close his e'en an' his lips wad move. I kenned that he was goin' o'er something that he wished to keep in his mind. I hae often said to mysel', 'There isna anither callan like him in a' these parts.'"

"What do you think, Marjorie," asked Sir William; "wull Roger continue his profession, or wull he drop it an' gi'e his time to authorship?"

"I dinna ken, but I think he wull keep to his profession for a while at least. Edith likes weel to hae him write, an' perhaps he does it to please her. How nicely he has tauld Elspeth's stories."

"Ay, has he. Muckle better than I tauld them to him," assented Elspeth.

"What has become o' Archie Grant, your auld sweetheart, Marjorie?" asked Sir William.

"He is at hame still, but he doesna amount to muckle. He is a chiel o' the most consequence in his ain e'en, an' o' the least consequence in the e'en o' others, o' all folk I hae met with."

"Hoot, Marjorie," laughed Sir William; "dinna be sae hard on auld friends."

"Weel, he wull never be warth the room that he takes up in the warld an' he doesna do better than he has sae far. Of course there is nae tellin' when he may take a turn for the better. I never knew two persons more unlike than Edith an' Archie Grant."

"Edith is a bonnie, winsome woman," said Graham.

"She is that," replied Mr. Ainslie, "but she is nae bonnier nor more winsome than oor ain wives, Graham."

"No, indeed," said Graham.

Mrs. Ainslie smiled, and Marjorie said, "Noo, Uncle Roger, you maunna feel that you hae to class me with Aunt Marion an' Edith. In mony ways I dinna feel their equal."

"An' whyfore no? We a' ken your warth too weel to allow you to speak sae o' yoursel'.

There isna ane here wha isna better because he has kenned you," said Sir William heartily.

"That is sae," came from one and another, and Marjorie's eyes grew dim because of this unexpected tribute to her modest worth. Her husband was the last to speak, and he said, "Marjorie's faithfulness to her God led me to think of the claims he has upon me, and now her consistent example is such a help to me that I bless God for giving me her companionship."

After this none but serious words were spoken. Each talked freely of the undeserved blessings that God had given, and when they parted it was with the feeling that they were not sufficiently thankful for the friendship of God, and that even earthly friendships are not fully appreciated.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DEATH OF SIR WILLIAM.

It was later in the season, though summer-time still. The sun's beams still fell upon the lap of earth, but Sir William no longer watched the full play of its morning radiance or the side-long rays it flung when setting. He was very ill, and no one doubted that it was his last illness.

Mrs. Ainslie was almost constantly at the bedside of her father. Elspeth came often to proffer her assistance, and was as often called away to answer the anxious inquiries of friends. Old Jock Cargill stopped three times a day to inquire of the Fisher laddies, if no one else was in sight, "Hoo is the maister noo?" And often he went in to see the sick man.

Nelly Hughs felt a great sympathy with the "sweet leddy," and she told Elspeth, "I ken a' aboot a separation that parts near friends. My, but there are mony trials in this warld o' ours," she added, sighing wearily. After a moment she continued, "I maunna forget that the Lord aye gives us grace to bear whatever he puts upon us."

"He does, Nelly. He does, that's for sure," returned Elspeth.

Many were the conversations that Elspeth held with Molly Cargill and Jean Moray during Sir William's illness. Nor were these conversations confined to Elspeth. Mrs. Ainslie often felt consoled by Molly's well-chosen words of Christian counsel. Molly Cargill's was a rich and ripe experience, nurtured by affliction. She was wont to sum up her troubles with these words of resignation, "God gave us four bonnie bairns, but for oor furtherance in the Christian course he saw fit to take them to himsel' again."

And Jean Moray with her good sense and her quick wit adapted herself in many ways to the needs of a household unsettled by a long and serious illness. The cotters themselves were not wanting when occasion offered a chance to help. It was James Moray who took turns with Aleck Fisher in watching at the bedside of Sir William, and it was Jock Cargill who bared his layart locks and prayed with his old master.

The sick man was very grateful for all the attention shown him, and Elspeth, noticing the sweetness of his temper, remarked to Marjorie, "It makes me think that he wunna rise up ony mair. I hae seen vera sick folk for whom I had nae fears; they were sae crabbed-like that nae-

body could please them. But a' that ane does for the maister is gude, an' it is 'Thank you,' an' 'Dinna trouble yoursel'.' It amaist makes me greet that he should think onything we do for him a trouble. For these mony years he has been the best o' maisters."

Marjorie Walker felt very sad, for she knew she was losing a good friend. She spent much of her time at the castle, trying to assist and comfort the afflicted family.

Even little Kenneth felt the hush upon his spirit, and little Annie looked up wonderingly into the saddened face of her mother. The Fisher lads thought not of noisy sports; they ate their "parritch" in silence, and dutifully waited about the doors in the hope of being useful.

Thus within and without the strong gray walls of the castle fell a quiet like the hush of the Sabbath. At last the end came, in the gray light of a September morning. Mr. and Mrs. Ainslie were sitting in the sick-room: she was tenderly holding the hand of the dying man. Already the film of death obscured his sight, but his voice was clear, though low, as he said, "Marion, I canna see you. It maun be time to say farewell. Where is Ainslie? Tell him I am goin' noo, an' bid him come here."

"I am here, faither."

“That is weel. I hae something to say to you both. I wish that it might be as effectual as the blessing o’ the ancient patriarchs. But I maun hasten, for death hastens. God bless you an’ yours after you even to mony generations. I believe that this auld castle is noo a godly hoose; never before hae the heads o’ it been united in servin’ God. You may hope for great things. God grant it to you oot o’ his ain fulness. Fare ye weel!”

In a few moments they noticed an unmistakable change. Mrs. Ainslie, still holding the hand that was fast becoming cold, slipped upon her knees and with bowed head silently committed the departing soul to God. Nor did she arise till her husband said, “Marion dear, he is awa’.”

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